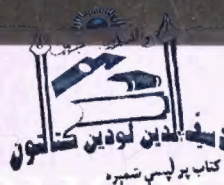




CURZON

# THE HAZARAS OF AFGHANISTAN

AN HISTORICAL,  
CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND  
POLITICAL STUDY



S.A. Mousavi



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An Historical, Cultural, Economic  
and Political Study

*Sayed Askar Mousavi*

CURZON



First Published in 1998  
by Curzon Press  
15 The Quadrant, Richmond  
Surrey, TW9 1BP

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Typeset in Sabon by LaserScript Ltd, Mitcham  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
Biddles Limited, Guildford and Kings Lynn

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*  
A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0-7007-0630-





## Dedication

*To my parents; and to my brother Musa and his son Jamil, our  
family's two martyrs for freedom . . .*



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# Acknowledgements

Any intellectual and academic achievement requires before all else peace of mind; unfortunately this research was written under psychological conditions far from peaceful. The painful events that have taken place in Afghanistan since the 1978 coup d'état have, I am sure, shaken and unsettled all conscientious individuals, although as we say in Farsi 'the ground where the fires burns, is most scorched'. Research at such a time appeared impossible and overcast by feelings of guilt; in particular research on the Hazaras, who are the least known and most neglected people of Afghanistan. Without the guidance and encouragement of my good friends under these circumstances, this work would never have been accomplished. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest thanks to the following. I thank, first and foremost, Dr Schuyler Jones, for his learned guidance, encouragement, constructive comments, and immeasurable help; and for showing unfailing good humour and patience in reading my manuscript several times. I also thank Lis Jones for her friendship and kindness at a time when I most needed these.

I should also like to thank the British Council for their generous funding of my long, but hopefully fruitful, years of education; and Peter Marsden for his timely co-operation and friendship. I am grateful to Dr Ali Razawi for his very special help and encouragement, for without his original insistence I would never have begun this work. I thank also my Hazara friends both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan for their help, in particular Mr Mohammad Ali Gulzari and Sayed Fazil Hossain Mousavi; and Shah Wali Shafayee for his constructive comments. My thanks also to Mr Malcolm Osman for his beautiful and skilful reproductions of my photographs; to Mr John Todd for his technical expertise; to Hossain Razawi for his help with the figures; and to Reza Fedai.

And finally, how can I thank Leila, for without her special and unique support I would never have finished this work.



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# Preface

The Hazaras are one of several ethnic groups inhabiting Afghanistan. Today they may be found living in regions throughout Afghanistan, although the majority still inhabit the areas of Central Afghanistan traditionally inhabited by them and known as the 'Hazarajat'. The map of Afghanistan no longer includes an area actually called the Hazarajat, so that an accurate description and demarcation of it in today's geography of Afghanistan is somewhat difficult. But the Hazarajat is generally considered to cover the three central provinces of Afghanistan: Bamiyan, Orozgan and Ghur, and parts of Herat, Farah, Qandahar, Ghazni, Parwan, Baghlan, Balkh and Badghis.

The Hazaras are Muslim and Shi'a in the majority. They speak Farsi, though with their own particular accent known as the 'Hazaragi' dialect. Their ethnic origins are as yet uncertain and under debate, despite their obvious Turko-Mogholi features. They are of mixed ethnic composition, and of quite ancient origin. In terms of numbers they form probably the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. However, as a consequence of the discriminatory and segregationist policies of ruling Afghan or Pashtun governments, they remain politically, economically and socially the most underdeveloped group in Afghanistan society. Due to their geopolitical location inside Afghanistan, they were able to live virtually autonomously until the 1890s, after which date they were ruthlessly subjugated. Their resurgence during the 1980s highlighted the potentially determining position enjoyed by the Hazaras, along with their defensive potential in the face of an invading army.

The study of the Hazaras of Afghanistan is not only of interest to the specialist, but provides the best introduction to the study of Afghanistan in general. Its location at the centre of Afghanistan not only accords geopolitical significance to the Hazarajat, but also



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provides its inhabitants with a unique cultural and tribal heritage. Just as Afghanistan is located at the crossroads of Asia and often referred to as the 'heart of Asia', so it would not be inappropriate to compare the relationship of the Hazaras to Afghanistan with that of the heart to the body.

The study of an isolated people and society, such as the Hazaras, is bound to be fraught with complexities. At the same time, because of the very socio-political system holding power in Afghanistan the study of the Hazaras had until recently been discouraged to the extent that they have remained unknown, as a people, to many of their fellow countrymen. The very presence of such complexities and obstacles, however, render such a study ever more exciting, enlightening and desirable, though frustrating and sad. This study is by way of an effort in the direction of redressing the present intellectual imbalance.

This book, which is the first serious study on the Hazaras of Afghanistan, is but an introduction to Hazaralogy. Many of the issues raised are only briefly covered in order not to imbalance the general introductory nature of the book. At the same time, the limitations in length imposed by the publisher's has meant that certain more specialized areas of Hazara studies, such as customs and traditions, have been entirely left out and postponed to future studies.

As well as an introduction to Hazaralogy, this book also introduces a new approach to Afghanistan studies in general. In the following pages I have adopted an entirely new approach to the study of the Hazaras and have undertaken a discussion of issues which may prove controversial.

This new approach, which undermines the accepted premises and findings of the majority of scholars in the field to date, will I hope provoke much discussion, but I fear some confusion and recrimination. Though unhappy about the prospect of upsetting colleagues and my fellow countrymen, I fear there is no other choice. Sooner or later, like every other academic topic, Afghanistan studies will have to open itself to new perspectives and analyses. The old perspective, arrived at as much by the dictates of Afghan nationalism as serious scholarship, in any case no longer applies to today's Afghanistan, as the confusion of commentators faced with current events demonstrates. Afghanistan is rapidly and inevitably evolving away from its past structure and history into a new, more contemporary society, and so requires a new understanding. Although I may be the first to present this new approach to Afghanistan studies so forcefully and seriously, I am certainly not the first to acknowledge it. Most Afghanistanis, not

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blinded by the dogmatism of Afghan nationalism, openly accept and discuss the need for a new understanding of Afghanistan, both by themselves and by the outside world. As we say in Farsi 'the truth is bitter', and I fear that under the present circumstances I may be accused of bearing bitter fruit.

Some points regarding the terminology and transliteration used in the book. One of the most confusing issues in Afghanistan studies is the use of the word 'Afghan'. The name is simultaneously used to refer to one of the country's many ethnic groups, who are also known as the Pashtuns, as well as referring to the inhabitants of Afghanistan, collectively called 'the Afghans'. In this book, the term 'Afghan' will be used only to refer to the Afghan or Pashtun people, its correct usage, and not to the other inhabitants of Afghanistan as a national description. Where a general term is required, the term 'Afghanistani' (as in Pakistani, etc.) will be used. Although this may initially create some confusion in the minds of readers accustomed to a different current usage, I believe as the book proceeds this distinction will greatly aid clarity and understanding. Furthermore, such a distinction is particularly necessary in an anthropological study for the sake of accuracy. Within quotations, wherever the term 'Afghan' is used by the original author as a general national term, it is further clarified by this writer with the addition of [Afghanistani], within square parentheses.

Throughout the book I have used the following system of transliteration. With respect to the transliteration of Farsi words, I have used the Dari (the Farsi accent of Afghanistan) pronunciation, for two reasons. First, because the thesis is on an aspect of Afghanistan, and second because in the opinion of many learned linguists and scholars of Farsi literature, Dari is more 'pure' i.e., it contains very few non-Farsi words as compared with the Farsi spoken in Iran. An example of this preference is *bachah* (boy) rather than *bach<sup>eh</sup>*.

In the transliteration of Arabic words and names, I have followed the rules of Arabic grammar and pronunciation. According to Arabic grammar the alphabet is divided into two groups: the *shamsi* letters and the *qamari* letters. Whenever 'al', the equivalent of 'the' in English, precedes a *qamari* letter it retains its literal pronunciation, e.g., *Nahjul Balagha*. However, when preceding a *shamsi* letter, its spoken form changes in pronunciation so that Abd al Rahman in the written form is read as Abdur Rahman; it is this spoken form which I have transferred into English.

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With the exception of a few terms, that is, terms commonly used with more than one correct pronunciation such as *Atak* or *Attok*, in transliterating Farsi or Arabic names and phrases I have chosen the spelling nearest to the original Farsi pronunciation, e.g., Mashhad rather than Mashad or Meshed (and other current transliterations used in English), and Moghol rather than Mughal or Mongol. However, when any such name or term is included as part of a quotation, the writer's original spelling is retained.

The book has been divided into nine main chapters, each covering one aspect of Hazara society. The Introduction provides the point of entry to our discussion by raising issues and questions which will be addressed throughout the rest of the text; issues such as the problem of 'national identity' in Afghanistan, or changing the name of Khorasan to Afghanistan. The Introduction also provides the theoretical framework underlying the new approach, through which alone in my opinion, it is possible to comprehend and gain access to the Hazara people and their society, and to Afghanistan. The general background and questions outlined here preempt the correct reading and understanding of the chapters which follow, with the aim of pointing the reader in the right direction towards finding the answers to the questions posed.

Chapter 1 deals with the debate on the origin of the Hazaras. Although this debate has up to now followed a traditional line of enquiry, here I have attempted to classify the various existing views, to summarize critically each in turn, and finally to arrive at a new prospective. Debates on the origins of all human groups are on the whole based largely on non-verifiable suppositions, and rarely lend themselves to finite conclusions. What I hope to have achieved here is to arrive, by looking critically at existing theories, at a more plausible view.

Chapters 2 and 3 look at the cultural and social structure of the Hazaras, discussing religion, language, art, social structure, population and geographical location. Here I have taken a critical look especially at the views currently held on the religion, population and geographical location of the Hazaras, in order to propose a new understanding of the significance of these factors. Chapter 4 examines the socio-political relations and mode of production of Hazara society. Here I consider agriculture, animal husbandry, commerce, and industry in the Hazarajat, and go on to outline and analyze the socio-economic changes that have taken place in Hazara society over approximately the last one hundred years.



## *Preface*

Chapter 5, which covers the most important and influential period in the recent social history of the Hazaras, looks at the socio-political transformation which has taken place since the tragic events of the 1890s, analysing their causes and consequences. Here, I review three existing analyses of these events, highlighting the particular weaknesses and shortcomings of the first two theories.

Chapter 6 examines the social changes in Hazara society following the events of the 1890s, studying in particular Hazara communities which have formed outside of Afghanistan since that time. Chapter 7 moves on to look at the development of Hazara society between 1919 and 1978, revealing the tragic circumstances endured by the Hazaras during these years, the extent of which will come as a surprise even to many people in Afghanistan itself.

Chapter 8 reviews and analyses the social conditions, changes and developments in Hazara society, the role of the Hazaras in the struggle for resistance which has been taking place since 1978, and the totally unexpected resurgence of the Hazaras since that time as one of the most significant political parties active in determining the future shape of Afghanistan. Chapter 9 studies Hazara society and its 'revival' during the 1990s. Finally, the Conclusion first provides a summary of the principal issues discussed, and secondly outlines the importance and indeed necessity of the study of the Hazaras, emphasizing particularly the significant role to be played by them in the future of Afghanistan.



# Introduction

The Hazaras are one of Afghanistan's some fifty-odd ethnic groups. With the exception of Lutfi Temirkhanov's study (1980) and Poladi's monographic history of the Hazaras (1989) on the social history of the Hazaras during the last 100 years, no serious study has been undertaken, which looks at the history, politics, economic and social conditions of the Hazaras. What little has been written on the Hazaras by foreign scholars has been either as a constituent part of other wider studies, such as those on nomadism, or on Afghanistan in general, in which case the Hazaras have only received passing mention. In both cases the information offered has been based on what I refer to as 'scientific rumours', rather than findings, on Afghanistan, a view which I hope will become clear to the reader as this book unfolds. Work on the Hazaras by Afghanistani scholars, such as Gharjistani (1988), Yazdani (1989), Poladi (1989) and La'li (1993) have generally originated from personal interest and lack analytical scholarship, or else are based on the work of foreign scholars, whose flaws I have already referred to.

The aim of this book is first and foremost the study of the Hazaras; as such it is the first scholarly study in this field. In so far as it is the first study of its kind on the Hazaras, it cannot but provide an introduction to 'Hazarology'. Furthermore, while the book deals with the Hazaras from ancient times in general terms, it concentrates on the last 100 years of the development of Hazara society. The reason for this is to relate the somewhat academic study of Hazara society to contemporary Afghanistan.

The study of the Hazaras, however, also requires a new approach to the study of Afghanistan itself. This is because any serious study of the Hazaras will undermine and bring into question the traditionally, and currently dominant view of Afghanistan. This accepted view of

## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

Afghanistan is based on what I refer to as the 'Afghan nationalist' view of the country's history and society. Afghan nationalism, discussed in more detail later on in this introduction, was the outcome of the end of colonial rule in the region. It was an ideology created and sustained by the Afghan or Pashtun people with the aim of establishing political control over the area known today as Afghanistan. In order to exercise this control it needed to deny the existence of the area's other ethnic groups, cultures and languages. To do this it had to rewrite history and redefine the area's cultural heritage. So that what the outside world got to know as Afghanistan was a country inhabited for thousands of years by the Afghan or Pashtun people, whose language was Pashto, an ancient language of the region, i.e., a narrow exclusive view. A new approach to the study of Afghanistan will, by contrast, view the country from the experiences and history of its fifty or more other ethnic groups, one of the largest and most oppressed of whom are the Hazaras. Although it is not the aim of this study to cover this ground, in view of what has been said, I believe a brief introduction to the historical background of modern day Afghanistan and to this new approach is necessary before we begin our study of the Hazaras.

### **Khorasan or Afghanistan?**

The country known today as Afghanistan was, until 150 years ago, called 'Khorasan'. While its geographic boundaries changed frequently, Khorasan, at any one time, was a bigger country than today's Afghanistan (Griffiths, 1967: VIII; Farhang, 1992, Vol. 1: 17–32). The present boundaries and the new name of 'Afghanistan' have been gradually formalized over the last 100 years or so.

Historically, the name Afghanistan emerged from socio-political developments in the area during the second half of the eighteenth century. The collapse of the Safavids (1500–1736) followed by the assassination of Nadir Shah Afshar (1736–47) in Iran to the west of Khorasan, along with the break-up of the Moghul Empire (1500–1800) in India to the east of Khorasan on the one hand, and the expansion and strengthening of Czarist Russia and British India to the north and east of Khorasan on the other hand, brought about fundamental upheavals in the political and social structures within the region. The result was the emergence of new borders and frontiers, nations and countries. The Persian Empire, based as it was on a federal structure comprising essentially large and small independent



## Introduction

federations of local rulers, each with a different nationality, language, culture and religion, broke down. During the next century two separate countries emerged as a result of this break-down within the boundaries of the old Empire; one became Iran and the other, Afghanistan.

What is interesting in the case of Afghanistan is that this newly created country remained nameless for over a century, even to its own founder, Ahmad Khan (1747–72). Indeed, in two very important documents remaining from this period, the name of ‘Afghanistan’ is never used.<sup>1</sup> The question of how a newly founded country can remain nameless can only be answered by speculation. However, one thing can be ascertained: the study of documents from the period reveals that during this period, which lasted for nearly a century, the name ‘Khorasan’ was widely used, while Ahmad Khan is believed to have regarded himself as the king of Khorasan. According to Farhang:

The state founded during the mid-eighteenth century (1747) by Ahmad Shah Abdali was known by the name of Khorasan during his own reign. It is said of Sabir Shah, advisor and consul to Ahmad Shah that, in a conversation with the ruler of Lahore, the former is alleged to have said: ‘He [Ahmad Shah] is the king of Khorasan, and you are a Subadar [governor] of the king of Hindustan’. (1992, Vol. 1: 20)

Similarly, Mahmoud Afshar maintains: ‘much literature and poetry have been produced in Farsi, in Afghanistan, previously known as Khorasan, by Khorasanians’ (Herawi, 1983: 10). Khorasan was used as the official name of the country by indigenous historians of the time until the second half of the nineteenth century. In this respect, Farhang writes:

Noor Mohammad Qandahari, who edited *Golshan-e Imarat*, a history of the reign of Amir Shir Ali Khan, writes during the following century in reference to Amir Dost Mohammad Khan father of Shir Ali Khan (1861–79): ‘At that time when our forgiving, generous and unique King, descended from Paradise, Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, reigned on the throne of the country of Khorasan, in the heavenly capital city of Kabul’. (1992: Vol. 1: 20)

Foreign writers have also noted that until the last decade of the nineteenth century, the inhabitants of Afghanistan called their country by the name of ‘Khorasan’. Raverty writes: ‘The country immediately

west of the great western range [mountains] of Mihtar Suliman is what Afghans always style Khorasan' (1888: 469). Bellew further supports this claim:

Khorasan is the name used by the people themselves to designate the country known to outsiders as Afghanistan, and the term fairly corresponds to the limits above assigned to the Ariana in its extended significance. (1891: 4)

Vigne (1982), who travelled to Afghanistan during the first half of the nineteenth century, and who resided for some time at the court of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, has entitled his book *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Ghazni, Kabul and Afghanistan*. The title appears to indicate that the name Afghanistan had limited use, referring only to the areas inhabited by the Afghans, that is, the Suleiman mountains and its environs.<sup>2</sup>

Despite much evidence, however, because of the sensitivity of the ruling Afghans, no serious or thorough study has so far been allowed to establish exactly when, by whom and for what reason, the name Afghanistan took the place of Khorasan. The only relevant document at hand indicates that the name of Afghanistan in its present context was first used in an agreement between Iran and Britain in 1801 (Farhang, 1992: Vol. 1: 24). It is thus possible to conjecture that even the name Afghanistan was chosen by foreign powers for the people of Afghanistan, rather than by the people of the land themselves.

The name Afghanistan, which is a Farsi compound name, is composed of the two words '*Afghan*' and '*stan*' (= place, land) meaning 'place or land of Afghans'. As such it referred originally only to the areas inhabited entirely or mostly by Afghans, i.e., the area covering Qandahar and its environs up to the Sind river (ibid.: 17); before 1800 the term had never been used to refer to the whole of the country. '*Stan*' in Farsi is a very commonly used place suffix, such as in: *golistan*, *shahristan*, *dabistan*, *boustan*, *koudakistan*; and place names, such as *Nouristan*, *Baluchistan*, *Hazaristan*, *Turkistan*, and so on. The use of '*stan*' to denote an entire country, however is a relatively new usage lending further support to the claim that Afghanistan is a recently forged name, so that in today's Afghanistan we also have Nouristan and Turkistan, and until the turn of the century we also had Hazaristan.

Afghanistan, as it is known today, is a country composed of different ethnic groups, only one of which are the Afghans or Pashtuns. The use of the name Afghanistan as the name of the entire

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country signals, at once, a monopoly of power and the enforcement of Afghan identity on non-Afghans, and the denial of the respective identities of the other peoples inhabiting the land. It is for this reason that the name has never been accepted by the other ethnic groups inhabiting Afghanistan, a fact apparently little known outside, but taken for granted within Afghanistan. Khorasan, on the other hand, is regarded as making no reference to any particular tribe or group, and as the historical name of the land for several centuries is respected and commonly used.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it refers to an identifiable literary and cultural heritage found in thousands of Farsi volumes on history, philosophy, science, geography and poetry, produced over some fourteen centuries. Interestingly, the Hazaras who migrated to Iran during the 1890s still refer to themselves as '*Khavari*', a variation on the adjective '*Khorasan*'.

It is exactly in this respect that it is possible to refer to the Hazaras, Afghans, Nuristanis, Tajiks, Uzbaks, Turkmen, Pashais, Baluchis, Arabs, Jats, Hindus, and other inhabitants of the country as '*Khorasani*', a name under which they have lived happily for centuries. Khorasan was a country in whose cultural, economic and political development they have taken part, without submission to domination or monopoly of power by any one nationality or tribe. It is thus incorrect to call the other ethnic groups in the country 'Afghan' or to refer to their country as Afghanistan or '*Afghanland*'; to do so is without linguistic or historic justification. In the same way we cannot refer to Great Britain as just England, Scotland or Wales; for to do so would imply one national identity and deny the cultural identity of its various peoples. Just as it would be wrong to call an Englishman Welsh or a Scotsman English, so it is wrong to call a Hazara Afghan, an Afghan Uzbek, an Uzbek Baluchi, a Nuristani Tajik, and so on.

### Afghan nationalism as taboo

If we take taboo to mean 'any divinity which is prohibited, or object which is untouchable or unmentionable',<sup>4</sup> Afghan nationalism can be identified as a taboo; for it is at once 'prohibited', 'untouchable' and 'unmentionable'. Over the decades, most issues in Afghanistan have been discussed, questioned, criticized and reappraised, nationally and openly, with the exception of one: Afghan nationalism.<sup>5</sup> Afghan nationalism, or Pashtunism, refers to the whole array of attitudes and beliefs which lie at the basis of the notion, held by the Afghans, of

their racial supremacy over and above all the other ethnic groups in Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> According to these beliefs the Afghans have the right to rule over the area known today as Afghanistan. Furthermore, this racial supremacy is regarded as a 'gift from God' to the Afghan people,<sup>7</sup> and it is seen by them as a charter for the establishment of social, economic, political, cultural and administrative structures needed to constitute a nation-state.<sup>8</sup>

According to Afghan nationalist thinking, the country bordered by Iran, Pakistan, China and the Soviet Union is called 'Afghanistan' and its inhabitants 'Afghan' (Pstrusinska, 1990: 27). It was founded by Ahmad Shah Durani (1747–73), and was later revived by Abdur Rahman (1880–1901), from which time onwards it has been ruled by the Mohammadzai family. While all the inhabitants of Afghanistan are referred to as 'Afghan', the Afghan or Pashtun tribe is 'more Afghan' than others.<sup>9</sup> For many, even the name Afghan was not acceptable, for they believed that the correct name for the people inhabiting the area should be 'Pashtun':

'Pashtun' is the name of the people and nation [inhabiting the area] from the Amu Darya to Abasin; from Kashmir and Baluchistan and Sistan to the Indian Ocean. (Pstrusinska, 1985: 117)

Similarly, the history of Afghanistan is regarded as consisting of no more than the accumulated histories of the reigns of Afghan Amirs and Pashtun tribes and people. With respect to regional relations, it is claimed that even before Ahmad Shah, Afghanistan enjoyed mutual relations with Iran, Central Asia and India. The origins of the Afghan people have been traced back to prehistoric times, while today their more recent Aryan roots are emphasized. Neighbouring peoples such as the Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbaks, Nuristanis, Baluchis and others are acknowledged only on the margins of Afghan studies and history, and are in themselves regarded as being of little historical significance or value. It is by extension of this approach that Afghan domination and rule is justified and its success hailed. Furthermore, it is claimed that during this period and process of 'Afghanization', the other peoples of this land have been assimilated and have gradually adopted an Afghan identity.<sup>10</sup> Pashto is represented as an historical language, and was made the official language of Afghanistan, its teaching made compulsory by government policy nationally (Gharghasht, 1966: 44–5; Pstrusinska, 1990: 33–6). This romantic chauvinism, which has dominated society in Afghanistan for over a century, has even



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influenced and made its way into the perceptions and analyses of foreign scholars:

The romantic image of the Pathan [Pashtun/Afghan] was that of a fearless, blue-eyed, hawk-nosed warrior silhouetted, with his *jezail* on a mountain ridge. Heroic deeds from the past littered the barren land. (Ahmed, 1986: 167)<sup>11</sup>

Afghan nationalism or Pashtunism as a mechanism for tribal domination and oppression has been enforced upon society and the people of Afghanistan for over a century.<sup>12</sup> The more recent theorizing on Pashtunism has, unfortunately, been much aided by foreign powers, as well as scholars and writers, albeit at times unwittingly. The result has been the emergence of a false identity of Afghanistan as a country. This false identity has also been mythologized by those same unwitting foreign writers. In some cases, the 'myth' portrayed has been so unreal and romantic that it has surprised even the Afghans themselves.<sup>13</sup>

Let us look at the factors which have contributed to the emergence and sustainment of this myth. The following are, in my opinion, the major contributing factors. First, the beginning of the 20th century saw the emergence of nationalist feelings and thinking among the educated urban elite in Afghanistan. Lack of internal political stability, and the vulnerability of the intelligentsia, followed by its practical annihilation after the 1929 coup d'état, coupled with the growth of fascism in Europe and in particular in Germany and the emergence of the latter as a superpower, all helped prepare the ground for the growth of extremist Pashtunist thinking inside Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup> Extremist urban elite 'Pashtunists', who benefited from the full backing of the government in Kabul, seized the opportunity offered by the prevailing international and national atmosphere to establish Afghanization fundamental state policy.<sup>15</sup>

In practice, the implications of this new policy were manifested in all areas of life and government. For example, economic investments were made exclusively in Afghan-inhabited regions (cf. Griffiths, 1967: 68), hundreds of thousands of Afghans were brought over from Pakistan and settled in areas throughout Afghanistan (Haqshinas, 1984: 380–1), Afghan tribes enjoyed exemptions from both tax and national military service (Ferdinand, 1963: 145), special Pashto language schools and universities along with education grants were established and provided exclusively for Pashtun students, even from Pakistan (Gharghasht, 1966: 194; Kushan, 1990: 11); and finally,

Pashto was established as the national official language of administration and education bodies (Gharghasht, 1966: 44–5; Griffiths, 1967: 66, 154; Farhang, 1992: Vol. 2: 635–9). Perhaps the most consequential step taken as a result of this new policy was the total rewriting of the history of Afghanistan on the basis of this Pashtunist ‘ideology’ by the *Anjoman-e Tarikh* (Historical Society) under the strict supervision of the *Pashto Tolana* (Pashto Academy) from the 1930s into the 1970s (Farhang, 1992: Vol. 3: 329–30). To further these aims extensive research was carried out on Pashto language, culture and traditions, in order to establish and justify these as a superior body of thought and beliefs.<sup>16</sup>

The Pashtun (Pashto speaking) men and women were to be emulated by all the Afghan [Afghanistani] people as perfect examples of humanity. The Pashtun mode of dress and their code of conduct (*Pashtunwali*) were depicted and emphasized in every text, even though some of its constituting parts like blood feud, or *badal* are contrary to the Shari’ah [Islamic law]. Also, the deeds of famous and not so famous Pashtun rulers were exaggerated in a positive light throughout the Afghan [Afghanistani] texts. (Shorish, 1985: 4–5)

A second factor responsible for the continuation of the mythical image of Afghanistan has been the very inaccurate picture of Afghanistan as portrayed by Western scholars, and more recently the media.

When most foreigners use the word ‘Afghan’, they are usually thinking of Pathans, forgetting that among the country’s inhabitants are very substantial minorities of Uzbeks, Hazaras, Turkmen and Tajiks not to speak of many smaller groups. (Griffiths, 1967: 65)

This image which gave a view of Afghanistan through one keyhole into the country, the Khaibar Pass on the North-West Frontier, was initiated by the first encounters of British India with Afghanistan. During the late 1700s, when the British Empire in India was expanding towards the northwest, the recently established Kingdom of Khorasan had become subject to internal fighting after the death of its founder, Ahmad Khan Abdali. His successors were happy with the name of Khorasan, and in any case were too busy fighting one another for power to concern themselves with renaming this newly conquered land for some time (Razawi, 1992: 300–2). Meanwhile, the British,

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on their march to the Hindu Kush, had experienced their first encounters with a section of the people of this new land, the 'Afghans', whom they were also to deal with later in their more formal contacts with Kabul. Unable to advance far into the region and ignorant of the presence and identity of other ethnic groups in this new land, they took to referring to all its inhabitants as 'Afghan'.

This encounter, along with the ensuing three wars between Afghanistan and Britain which occurred during the following 120 years and their associated bittersweet memories, combined with the bravery, self-sacrifice, pride and directness displayed by the inhabitants of Afghanistan, led to the creation of a particular romantic image of the peoples beyond the Khaibar by many British travellers and diarists of the times. Later, these characteristics, some admirable others less so, were attributed more widely to all Afghanistanis, to include those inhabiting both sides of the so-called Durand Line. With the emergence of the Pashtunistan issue and the peaking of the domination of the 'Pashtunists' in Afghanistan, these exaggerated and unrealistic accounts and portrayals were in time taken up by the Afghans themselves, who then proceeded to further exaggerate and romanticize them. Virtually all the foreign works that have been written and published on Afghanistan are a reflection of this romanticism, including such authoritative studies as *The Pathans* by Olaf Caroe (1986), and *Pathans* by Ridgway (1983).

As a consequence of the above two factors, and the turn of events since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1978, this originally British-created myth has been further perpetuated by both foreign and indigenous journalists, film-makers, poets, fiction and non-fiction writers. It has now become an image so universally accepted that few would consider questioning it. Perhaps the most influential and therefore misleading misrepresentations have been made by those recent entrants in the field of Afghanistan studies, such as Ahmed (1986: 29–46, 90). Clearly greatly influenced by events since 1978 and the existing misrepresentation of Afghanistan, Ahmed sets out in his writings to provide social scientific justification and explanation for the generally discriminatory tenets of Pashtunism. For example, Ahmed goes to great lengths to explain, and add historical credence to, the notion of '*Pashtunwali*' the alleged Pashtun code of conduct (1986: 29, 30, 44, 135; 1976: 6–7), created by the aforementioned *Pashtu Tolana* in its attempt to justify and promote the supposed supremacy of the Afghan or Pashtun people.<sup>17</sup>

The combination of these three factors has resulted in the creation of a 'taboo' which comes to the surface with every attempt to discuss issues such as 'nationality', 'nation', 'rights', the 'constitution', or questions such as that of 'identity' and 'ethnicity', in Afghanistan, in other words, the taboo of Afghan nationalism. The other side of the coin of Afghan nationalism is the crisis of national identity.

### **National identity crisis**

Robert Canfield in my opinion comes closest to identifying the complexities of Afghanistan society, by describing it as a nation suffering from a crisis of social identity. Canfield first identifies social identities as:

cultural phenomena . . . embodied in customs, emblems, institutions, lexical categories, etc., and they imply relationships among people. They are essentially normative constructs, entailing concepts of obligation, status, authority and the like. (1988: 185)

He then proceeds to identify and analyse the crisis of social identity in Afghanistan on the basis of this definition. While he makes some new and interesting points, his analysis gives rise to two questions. First, can the situation in Afghanistan be accurately defined as a crisis of *social* identity? If a people have not succeeded in resolving the question of their 'national' identity in the first place, how relevant is it to speak of their 'social' identity? This is relevant because what we are faced with in Afghanistan is a 'fragmental' rather than a 'national' or even a 'plural' society. It is my view that 'fragmental' is the most accurate description of Afghanistan's tribal society, and that therefore the root crisis in Afghanistan is a crisis of 'national' as opposed to 'social' identity; that is to say that no national identity has as yet been forged. Second, why confine the crisis of social identity to the events since 1978? While the outcome of many events in Afghanistan over the years has been ultimately determined by internal factors, the events since 1978 nevertheless cannot be truly understood unless they are viewed as the inevitable outcome of external as well as internal factors at work in the region over the past 100 years or so.

National identity crisis is an historical phenomenon, brought about by the contradiction and incompatibility between the social awareness of individuals with respect to their historical heritage and roots on the one hand, and their present social reality on the other hand. Some examples

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of the consequences of this crisis are found in the struggles of the indigenous peoples of Palestine, Kashmir, Northern Ireland, East Timor, Tamil Nadu, the Kurds, and the Basques. The conflicts one witnesses everyday in these regions are the inevitable outcome of the post-colonial era, in the sense that the great majority of today's 'national' borders are the direct legacy of the end of colonial rule, when arbitrary boundaries were drawn and enforced on newly formed 'nations'. The crisis of national identity can thus be defined as the disparity between 'nationhood' and 'nationality'. For example, countries such as Israel, India and China cannot and do not reflect the historical identity of the Palestinians, Kashmiris and the Tibetans respectively. This leads to the cultural, social, political and economic dissatisfaction and alienation of these peoples. Afghanistan is another example.

In order for a country to achieve national identity it must fairly represent all its inhabitants; it must have a name with which they all identify, a culture which does not alienate them but instead is representative and reflective of their historical, social and spiritual needs, aspirations and values, and a political structure and economy based on justice and equality. Only then can there be reconciliation between 'nationhood', 'nationality', and ultimately individual identity. Returning to our examples, we can see clearly that none of the respective governments of Israel, India or China fulfil these conditions for acceptance by their alienated populations; in all three countries, large sections of the population are alienated and marginalized by the dominant political and social structure, culture, economy, and the very name of their respective countries. It is precisely for the expression of this dissatisfaction and alienation that they struggle and are willing to make every sacrifice, including that of their lives.

The crisis of national identity may at times arise in reaction to the presence of non-indigenous forces, such as the white Afrikaners in South Africa. In this case non-indigenous powers dominating the country have chosen to disregard the national identity of a particular indigenous group, and have forced onto them instead an alien identity. In other instances, this crisis may be the outcome of the domination by one clan, tribe or nationality from within the same borders over another or other sections of the population, such as the domination of the Tibetans by the Chinese, the Kashmiris in India, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, or in this case the Afghans over Afghanistan's other ethnic groups. In both cases of indigenous and non-indigenous domination, the oppressed struggle, resist and sacrifice relentlessly, while the oppressor suppresses, dominates and discriminates.



The national identity crisis in Afghanistan, in my opinion, lies at the root of the social, political, economic and cultural underdevelopment of Afghanistan. The crisis of national identity in Afghanistan is also a long-standing historical phenomenon and can in no way be solely blamed on the events since 1978. A thorough sociological, anthropological, and in particular, ethnographic analysis of the events of the past 100 years in Afghanistan will reveal that, while this period has witnessed the political success of the Afghan tribes, it has also been witness to exactly the opposite destiny for the other peoples of Afghanistan, namely cultural, historical, economic and political backwardness, and worst of all, loss of identity. These other peoples, who have never been treated as equal citizens or given much say in their country's affairs together comprise the majority of the population of Afghanistan. However, they have found themselves excluded and discriminated against by the very name of their country (Pstrusinska, 1990: 27), fabricated history (Farhang, 1992, Vol. 3: 329–30), mythology, political structure, economy, language and national culture, and forced to suffer humiliation, intimidation and isolation which has in turn caused inevitable loss of identity.

The painful events of the 1980s brought about the dismantling of the tribal structure of society in Afghanistan. Consequently, the century-old taboo of Afghan nationalism was broken. For the first time, serious discussions began addressing the need for the revision of the history of Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> Although the issues of national identity, Afghan nationalism or Pashtunism remain very sensitive, the events of the past fifty years or so have proven that the evasion of these issues is not only not a solution, but can in fact cause additional problems. For example, it is now widely believed by many in Afghanistan that the main factor leading to the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union was the lack of a united and powerful central national government. For in Afghanistan, 'central government' has traditionally meant the monopoly of power and domination by the Afghans, with the inevitable consequence of the underdevelopment of the whole of society in Afghanistan. The famous saying: 'it was the Afghans who led the British to the very gates of Kabul' (a reference to the first military excursion by the British into Afghanistan and the ensuing emplacement of Shah Shoja (1839–42) in Kabul) has since been adapted within the context of the events since 1978; it is now being said that, once again, it was the Afghans who led the Soviets into Afghanistan (reference here to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan aided by Taraki, Amin, Karmal and Najibullah). History documents

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that it is the seal and signature of none other than Afghan Amirs, Kings, and Presidents which are found at the bottom of all political, military and economic agreements and contracts signed in Afghanistan over the past 250 years.

The marginalisation experienced by the non-Afghan majority, coupled with discrimination, terror, oppression and underdevelopment, both at the local and national levels, underlies the crisis of national identity as the main obstacle to the evolution of Afghanistan into the modern era. The study of the Hazaras can serve to highlight this crisis of national identity in Afghanistan.

### **Towards a new approach**

What has so far been said raises the question of why an issue as significant as tribal and ethnic discrimination in Afghanistan has never been seriously addressed. Why has no real effort ever been made to understand and resolve this phenomenon, at least within the academic sphere, if not within the political and practical arena? The only explanation in my view must be that, from the political point of view, any discussion regarding the national identity of Afghanistan inevitably threatens the power pyramid operating in the country. Any discussion which has the potential to undermine the power and interests of those at the top of this pyramid is bound to be considered undesirable by those benefiting from the dominant stratification, to the point where it is banned and the problem at its centre denied altogether.

The denial of socio-political phenomena, however, cannot alter their underlying reality, other than perhaps to aggravate them. Change and progress in any direction can ultimately only be attained once society is opened up and allowed to face the questioning, the criticism and analysis of its 'taboos'. The identification and comprehension of the taboo of Afghan nationalism or Pashtunism are vital to the understanding of Afghanistan's internal conflicts, its slow pace of political and social development, and its failure to evolve and consolidate itself into a powerful and effective 'nation-state'.

It is within this context that we may begin to look afresh at the recent history of Afghanistan and its slow pace of development in the contemporary era. Throughout this period no amount of aid given, no development plans, economic programmes or political reforms have succeeded in bringing about any substantial developments in the country. On the contrary, the only results achieved have been

regressive. The reason? While aid has been accepted in the name, and for the development, of the whole of Afghanistan, the ethnocentric mentality of successive nationalist Afghan regimes has been such that, in practice and by intention, aid has been used primarily for the pursuit and fulfilment of the expansionist desires of Pashtunism. The notion of 'Pashtunistan', that is, the call for the creation of a separate Pashtun state, is a perfect example of such desires, albeit unfulfilled. This is especially so since it has emerged that the entire issue was no more than a huge political deception. According to no less an authority than Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the 'Gandhi' of the North West Frontier, father of Pashtun nationalism, and leader of the *Khoda'ye Khidmatkaran* party (the independence movement of Pashtunistan), the Pashtunistan issue was no more than a political game, created by Afghanistan and India to be used as a propaganda tool against Pakistan (*The Muslim*, 30 May 1982).<sup>19</sup>

The existence of Afghan nationalism and its ensuing oppression has led to much 'historical fabrication' and deception aimed at the justification and consolidation of the 'supremacy' of, and monopoly of power by, the Afghans. This process has led to the 'Afghanization' of the country (cf. Griffiths, 1967: 66). In the following chapters we shall see not just the effects that this process has had on the Hazaras as one of the peoples of Afghanistan. We shall also see how the work of many scholars on Afghanistan, both foreign and domestic, has over the decades been for the most part a mere reflection of the established precepts of Afghan nationalism. Apart from a few exceptions, such as Schuyler Jones (1967, 1974) on Nouristan, Robert Canfield (1973) on the socio-religious structure and relations of the people of Bamiyan, and Klaus Ferdinand (1962, 1963, 1965, 1969) on nomadism in Afghanistan, and some scholars from Afghanistan, such as Nazif Shahrani (1979), Haqshinas (1984), and Farhang (1992), the work of many scholars has been on the whole little more than translations or reproductions of the imaginative rewriting of history by Afghan Nationalists disseminated by the Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan. A very good example of this is *Afghanistan* by L. Dupree (1980).<sup>20</sup> Most of what has been written to date does not and cannot coincide with the social, political, historical and economic realities of Afghanistan.

The reappraisal of the recent history of Afghanistan can only be achieved by the thorough study of its various ethnic and tribal groups, and their mutual relations throughout their historical evolution from ancient times. To do this we must turn to social classifications which

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group members of every 'nation' into ethnic, linguistic, religious and geographic divisions. The study of these categories, structures and social relations is one way of arriving at an understanding of the whole nation. Furthermore, just as the history of Afghanistan is not restricted to the events of the last two or three centuries and the reign and history of one tribe alone, similarly its geography and physical boundaries have continued changing throughout its history. Thus, as long as we remain bound by these recently established geographical frontiers of Afghanistan, we shall never succeed in discovering the true historical nature of Afghanistan.

The history and geography of Afghanistan are mutually and inextricably connected with that of the whole of Central Asia, a region with frequently changing boundaries and many thousands of years of history and cultural background. For example, a scholar researching the *gileem*, *jajeem* and *qaleen* (all types of carpet), who must find out about the identity of the people making them, their country of origin, the original weave and designs of the carpets, the changes they have undergone and the reasons behind these changes, cannot restrict his search to just one country or period. Since all three terms are Turkish and are used throughout Central Asia, Iran and Turkey, would this scholar be able to arrive at accurate and comprehensive results by visiting only Turkey, or only southern Iran to investigate the tribes where these carpets are made today? The answer must be no. The Turkish tribes of Central Asia have migrated to and settled in today's Turkey and Iran over a period of several centuries. During this time they have undergone enormous social and cultural changes. These changes have inevitably been reflected in their handicrafts, of which *gileem*, *jajeem* and *qaleen* are but three examples. In order to understand and assess the extent of these changes, it would be necessary to study and compare samples of the original designs and the variations over the years, along with current samples from present-day Turkey and Iran. Only by studying all the different stages of the development of the craft can our scholar arrive at an accurate understanding of the present day *gileems*, *jajeems* and *qaleens*.

If we replace *gileem*, *jajeem* and *qaleen* in our example, with Afghanistan, we can go on to describe Afghanistan as none other than a woven carpet of history, which after several thousands of years of evolution and change along its historical route, has arrived at its present form, name, and location. It would be impossible to comprehend the Afghanistan of today without a thorough understanding of its rich and



long history. It is in this way that the study of relations between any and all the peoples of Afghanistan, such as the Nuristanis, Uzbaks, Afghans, Hazaras, Tajiks, and others within the context of the ancient and long history of the region can aid us in arriving at a more accurate and objective understanding of society in today's Afghanistan. Such an understanding requires a journey to the other side of contemporary frontiers, and into the hinterlands of contemporary history.

It therefore becomes clear that any study of Afghanistan and its people must first choose between the two different approaches to Afghanistan: an Afghan Nationalist perspective of the country and region; or a socio-anthropological approach. This second perspective is what I refer to when I speak of a 'new approach', even though its practice elsewhere in the world is far from new. One aim of this study is to provide the basis and necessary background for the introduction and launch of this new approach in the field of Afghanistan studies in general, and Hazara studies in particular.

One of the prerequisites of this new approach is the study of the different peoples inhabiting Afghanistan today. The geographic boundaries of modern Afghanistan are regarded as of little relevance and value in anthropology. For the anthropologist must concern himself first and foremost with the study of human social classifications outside the confines of 'national' maps, for classifications, such as tribe, were not formed within the neat confines of modern geographic boundaries (though perhaps within natural geographic restrictions). Political boundaries on the contrary, have not been drawn in accordance with these human social divisions. Indeed, it has happened that a modern political boundary has been drawn down the middle of a village, piece of land or house of a people, thereby creating false divisions. Such as, for example, among the Pashtuns or the Nuristanis, who have as a result been divided on the two sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border;<sup>21</sup> or the Uzbek, Turkman, and Tajiks, who have been split between Iran, Afghanistan, and the ex-Soviet Union, and so on. In order to study any of these peoples it is necessary to do so over and beyond their present geographic confines.

In applying what has so far been said to the study of society in today's Afghanistan, it is necessary to understand, first, the internal relations and tribal structure of Afghanistan, and second, the historic links and position of Afghanistan within the region. The study of tribal structure and inter-tribal relations in contemporary society in Afghanistan, along with the study of Afghanistan within the region, reveal that what has until now been named 'national state' in



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Afghanistan has been no more than a 'tribal state'. The political system of Afghanistan has been based on the protection of the tribal interests of the Afghans, with the ultimate aim of the Afghanization of the entire country. It is only with a thorough understanding of the above two factors that we may arrive at a realistic identification of the national identity of the inhabitants of Afghanistan. This national identity, while including the identities of all the peoples of Afghanistan, would in no way deny the identity and rights of any tribe or people. On the contrary, such a national identity would be acceptable to all ethnic groups and would enrich and encourage individual tribal identities. The ensuing result would be a socio-political system based on federalism, running on the consolidated power of various social groupings striving for development and the improvement of the entire society. A society in which tribal and other sectarian conflicts and contradictions would be resolved to the advantage of national unity; a society in which no tribe or group feels alienated and marginalized, and where no group can claim itself superior to others.

What follows in this book is a study carried out on the basis of the new approach outlined above. It is a study of the Hazara peoples of Afghanistan based on the examination of many as yet unpublished and previously unexamined texts and documents. It is aimed at identifying the role and place of the Hazaras in contemporary Afghanistan. What makes the study of the Hazaras particularly relevant, among all the other peoples of Afghanistan, is that in the social pyramid of the country, the Hazaras have traditionally occupied the lowest ranks, while they are probably the only other ethnic group who could challenge and threaten the domination of power by the Afghans, both from the point of view of numbers and geographic location. In this fact may even lie the explanation for the relentless isolation, de-identification and oppression of the Hazaras by successive Afghan regimes, more and above all other peoples. Others, such as the Nuristanis and the Uzbaks, have not always fared much better, except that being Sunni they have not suffered religious oppression in the way that the Shi'a Hazaras have.<sup>22</sup>

The war of the last two decades in Afghanistan, for all its destruction and devastation, has acted as a significant factor and catalyst in bringing about substantial political, economic, social and structural change. So that the aforementioned socio-tribal pyramid has collapsed, allowing, for the first time, all the peoples of Afghanistan a chance to participate in the construction of a fairer

## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

society and a more united nation. The Hazaras, in their turn, are not only potential actors in this reconstruction, but could play a most decisive role.

It is precisely for this reason, that in the study of the present socio-tribal pyramid of Afghanistan, the Hazaras are of fundamental significance. Furthermore, such a study will serve to highlight the accepted chauvinist-nationalist picture of Afghanistan, based on the tribal-pyramid view of society, as a dangerous and unfounded fallacy. It is therefore quite possible that the contents of this book will create some confusion, even dismay, among those accustomed to the traditionally accepted view of Afghanistan.

# Chapter 1

## Who are the Hazaras?

*kharboza az kharboza rang bal mona.*

One is bound to be effected by.

A Hazaragi proverb



The frequent reshaping of geo-political borders, which constitutes a determining factor in the evolution and history of human societies, can itself bring about the creation and emergence of new nations and socio-political structures. The most recent examples of this can be seen in the newly formed nations of Africa, which have come into being only during the past half century or so, following independence from European colonial rule. The growth of mercantilism in the West led to the search for new markets in Africa and Asia. This, in turn, led to new patterns of displacement and integration in the social, economic, political, historical and geographical structure of these continents, forming over time the contemporary geo-political map of Asia and Africa.

These changes, referred to as 'human dislocation and integration', constitute one of the most significant factors in the socio-historical evolution of peoples everywhere. Afghanistan, often referred to as the 'crossroads of Asian history',<sup>1</sup> is a prime example of the historic outcome of this human displacement and integration. In order to facilitate a clearer understanding of society in Afghanistan, I shall use the concept of the 'Chinese Box'<sup>2</sup> in sociology. The Chinese Box is made up of a series of several smaller boxes in consecutive sizes fitting inside one another, with the largest box containing all. The Chinese Box of Afghanistan is made up of several smaller 'boxes' of different peoples and nations, all forming Afghanistan, such as: the Nuristanis, the Afghans, the Hazaras, the Tajiks, the Baluchis, etc.; with each in turn representing an independent Chinese Box. These boxes which

make up the ultimate Chinese Box of Afghanistan are the inevitable outcome of several thousand years of the dislocation and integration of the peoples of south, west and central Asia. In other words, Afghanistan has evolved from the continuous process of the displacement and integration of different peoples and cultures.

It follows thus that any objective and thorough study of Afghanistan necessitates an understanding and study of its constituent peoples. The clearer and more thorough our understanding of the peoples who make up Afghanistan, the more accurate our analysis of Afghanistan as a whole. The various characteristics of the people of Nuristan, such as their religion, language, mode of life, traditions, architecture, even their physical appearance: bone structure, colour of hair and eyes, led to the conclusion by some 19th-century writers that the Nuristanis must be descendants of the soldiers of Alexander the Great from the time of his expeditions into this part of the continent (Abercrombie, 1968: 336).<sup>3</sup> But, what is the true origin of the Nuristanis? Similarly, what is the origin of the Afghans? The physical attributes, social structure and traditions of the Afghan people have led some to believe that they are the descendants of the *Augana*, the lost tribe of Israel who were exiled by Alexander the Great to the Sulaiman Mountains (Bellew, 1891: 11 and 1880: 15–27; Sultan, 1980, Vol. 2: 300; Caroe, 1986: 3–24; Ridgway, 1983: 1–11; Farhang, 1992, Vol. 1: 35–7). According to legend, because of their continued link with the Jews of Mecca and Medina, and the guidance of Khalid Ibn Walid, one of the newly converted officers in contact with the Afghans of the Sulaiman Mountains, the Afghans converted to Islam. How accurate is this? Similarly, who can determine the early history of the Tajiks? According to some the name Tajik is derived from Tazik, which itself is derived from *tazi*, the Farsi name for Arabs, making the Tajiks the same as the Taziks or Arabs who emigrated to Iran and Afghanistan and inter-married with the native inhabitants of the area.<sup>4</sup> Thus, they are Tazik or Arab, or more likely a mixed race of Arabs and Persians, who have gradually become, over the past twelve centuries, the people they are today. And what about the Sayyeds? In Afghanistan there are several types, of which the Shi'a: Mousavi, Alavi, Hossaini and Razawi are most notable, while others include the Sunni Hazrat, Ishan, and Khaja.<sup>5</sup> Which peoples and races do they belong to? Or where do the Pashai come from?

The study of the Chinese Box of the whole of Afghanistan is beyond the scope of this book. My aim here is to study one of these boxes, the Hazaras of Afghanistan. Who are the Hazaras? Where do



they come from? How has their particular identity influenced their evolution as a people? What has been their role in the political and historical development of Afghanistan? These are the main questions to be investigated in this study.

Although research on the origin and history of the Hazaras began before the nineteenth century, 'Hazarology' has remained static and has made little headway during the past hundred years. This, on the one hand, has been due to conditions in Afghanistan itself, which has remained, for the most part, a closed and feudal-tribal society. On the other hand, the emergence of Afghanistan as a buffer state between two great powers has significantly limited its social, political and cultural development. For more than a century, Afghanistan acted as a buffer state between British and Russian interests in Asia. Consequently there was little change in its social and political structure and it was unable to consolidate itself into a nation-state. These factors have prevented any thorough research from being carried out. At the same time, the sphere has been left open to the emergence of many diverse theories as to the origins and history of the different peoples of Afghanistan. Theories about the Hazaras are no exception and are perhaps a prime example of this diversity of opinion. It is very difficult to arrive at scholarly conclusions in Hazarology, as our knowledge of the subject stands at present.

In this section I shall endeavour to provide a background against which later sections can be set, by dealing with the question of the origin and historical background of the Hazaras. First, I present and summarize theories put forward to date by different anthropologists, ethnologists and historians, on the origin of the Hazara people; and then go on to review, criticize and to draw conclusions from these. Here I should point out that I have classified all the different theories on the origin and evolution of the Hazaras into three categories: the theory of the autochthonicity of the Hazaras, the theory of the Hazaras as descendants of the Moghols, and the theory of the Hazaras as a mixed race. I have come across this classification trinity both among scholars on Hazara, and the Hazara people themselves.

### **1.1 The theory of the autochthonicity of the Hazaras**

This theory was proposed by the French scholar, J. P. Ferrier (1857: 221), in the 19th century. According to Ferrier, the Hazaras have inhabited Afghanistan since the time of Alexander the Great. As proof of his theory, Ferrier quotes battle accounts by the Greek historian,



Quintus Curtius, of excursions by Alexander into central Afghanistan. By drawing on such accounts, Ferrier seeks to establish that the people mentioned in these battle accounts were in fact the forefathers of the people currently known as the Hazaras.

Ferrier's theory has been supported by certain Afghanistani scholars, such as Abdul Hay Habibi (1962). By drawing on information provided in Foucher's *Iranian Civilisation*, Habibi provides linguistic evidence which he maintains supports the theory of the autochthonicity of the Hazaras. Habibi puts forward three findings which he proposes as proof.

First, he states that the name Hazara was not given only to the people of central Afghanistan; the people of Aba Sin, the foothills of Mahobon to Haripour, Abbotabad, Pakhlai, Kaghan and down to the foothills of the Kashmir Mountains were also known as Hazara. These people, however, are neither Tatars nor Moghols; they are thought to be the descendants of Indo-Aryans and their dialect is derived from an Indo-Iranian dialect (Habibi, 1962: 3). Habibi himself gives no references in support of his views, but among informative sources is *Tawarikh-e Molk-e Hazara* by Mahtab Singh, himself of the Kayath tribes (1819–49), providing excellent documentation. The writings of Major H. G. Raverty on the Panjabi Hazaras also names two different kinds of Hazaras: the Chhach[a]h Hazaras and the Karluk or Qarluq Hazaras (1888: 280–2, 292). Raverty's observation, however, fails to provide any explanation for the people known as Panjabi Hazaras.<sup>6</sup> For it is a fact that Changiz Khan never crossed the Sind river; once Jalaluddin Khawarazm Shah had reached Aba Sin through the Nilab (south of Attock) crossing, Changiz was forced to return because of bad weather (Rashiduddin 1338/1959: Vol. 1: 376–9). Thus, if the Hazaras are the descendants of Changiz's army, how can we explain the presence of Hazaras on the other side of Aba Sin, where Changiz's soldiers never ventured?

Second, from an historical point of view, the name Hazara dates back to the pre-Moghol invasion. When Hiuen Tsiang, the famous Chinese explorer, returned from a visit to India (644 AD), to *Tsu-Koo-Cha* (or *Arachozia*), he named its first capital *Ho-See-Na*, and its second capital *Ho-Sa-La*. Some time later, Saint Martin identifies *Ho-See-Na* with Ghazni, and *Ho-Sa-La* with *Hazara*. Around the same period, Ptolemy writes of a place called *Ozala* in north-western Arachozia (Habibi, 1962: 4).

According to Habibi, *Ho-Sa-La* and *Ozala* are one and the same place, the first being its Chinese name and the latter its Greek name.

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Both names have three syllables: *Ho-Sa-La* = *O-za-la*; the transformation of 'ho' into 'o', 's' into 'z', and 'l' into 'r' is linguistically justifiable and with precedence, e.g. in Farsi *diwar* becomes *diwal*, because of proximity in pronunciation. Furthermore, Habibi maintains that the existence of numerous three syllable words such as Hazara in the works of Greek and Chinese pilgrims in the seventh century (of the Christian era) is further proof of the pre-Moghol origin of the word Hazara. Thus, he concludes: 'The Hazaras have co-habited throughout several centuries with Afghans since the time of Alexander the Great' (ibid.: 5).<sup>7</sup>

Third, quoting Foucher and Saint-Martin, Habibi recounts the occasion on which while accompanying one of the kings of Afghanistan on one of his regular tax-collecting trips in central Afghanistan, Hiuen Tisang notes with surprise as they travel through Hazarajat, the particular physical characteristics of its inhabitants, namely their Chinese-looking appearance. According to Foucher, while crossing southern Afghanistan towards the mountains of the north some one thousand years before Hiuen Tsiang, Alexander the Great had come across a people unknown to him, whom he had described as more unyielding than any others he had come across.

Habibi does not, however, reject the theory which suggests that *Hazara* derives from the Farsi translation for the Mogholi word *ming* (a military term used in the Moghol army for sections of 1000 troops), *hazar*, but he does suggest that this new post-Moghol Farsi translation of *ming* has been confused with the ancient word *Hazara*. According to Habibi the existence of the name *Hazara* in ancient Chinese and Greek works discredits claims that the name is of Moghol origin coined at the time of Changiz Khan. Habibi maintains that *hazara* is an ancient Aryan word, meaning 'pure-hearted' and 'generous', and not in this case *hazar* (or 1000), the Farsi translation of the Mogholi *ming* (Ibid:8).

Michael Weiers, the German linguist who is in agreement with Foucher and Habibi, maintains in his lexicostatistical study of the Hazaras that:

information obtained from Moghols of Afghanistan living nowadays within and near the Herat oasis showed on the other hand, that there exists no such original relation between these two groups . . . By means of this statistical method the author comes to the conclusion, that linguistically the Hazaras and Mongols of Afghanistan have no genetic relation at all. (1975: 102)

## 1.2 The Hazaras as descendants of the Moghols

Among the first proponents of this theory were Armenius Vambéry (1864: 132), Mountstuart Elphinstone (1978: Vol. 2: 249) and Alexander Burnes (1839: Vol. 2: 261). According to this theory, the Hazaras are the descendants of Moghol soldiers who came to Afghanistan with Changiz Khan's army. After settling in, these soldiers gradually adopted the language, religion, and culture of the Tajik inhabitants of the area and so laid the origins for the people now known as the Hazaras. Many contemporary political scientists confirm this theory and classify it as an example of settler colonialism, according to which the presence of colonial forces, whether temporary or permanent, brings about irreversible changes and developments in the mode of life and social structure of the native society.<sup>8</sup> More recent and contemporary examples of settler colonialism have been the French inhabitants of Northern Algeria before 1962, the Dutch Afrikaners in South Africa, and European Jews in occupied Palestine.<sup>9</sup>

*Hazaragi*, the Farsi dialect spoken by the Hazaras, can also be compared with the Afrikaans language spoken by Dutch settlers in South Africa, both being examples of the same socio-political phenomenon, whereby the permanent settlement of a colonial power in a colony leads to the emergence of a new culture and language.<sup>10</sup> Thus, it is by no means far-fetched to conjecture that by settling in central Afghanistan, Moghol soldiers brought about the emergence of a new people.

Another of the proponents of this theory was H. W. Bellew. According to him, Moghol soldiers were

planted here [central Afghanistan] as military colonists in detachments of a thousand fighting men by Changhiz Khan in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. It is said that Changhiz Khan left ten such detachments here, nine of them in the Hazarah of Kabul, and the tenth in the Hazarah of Pakli [Pakhlai] to the east of the Indus. (1880: 114)

Since Farsi had been the language of the indigenous peoples, so it was adopted by the new Moghol settlers. In order to prove this theory, Bellew turns to geographical names. He believes that the existence of Panjabi Hazaras in what is now northern Pakistan is proof of the settlement of Moghol soldiers in this area (*ibid.*: 13–14). The presence of several place names, such as Dara-ye Hazara, between Laghman

and Kapisa in the north-east of Afghanistan today, away from the central areas, also lends support to Bellew's theory.

Furthermore, the Hazaras were relatives of Moghul warriors, serfs and descendants of Moghul feudal lords, themselves related to Changiz's commanders. To this day, many Hazara tribal and family names are taken from Moghul leaders and commanders, for example: one Hazara group is named 'Day Choupan', after one of the landlords close to Abu Sa'id, known as 'Amir Choupan', who led his army into eastern Khorasan and settled there (eastern Khorasan possibly referring to the area known today as Orozgan) (Temirknanov, 1980: 19; Orazgani, 1913: 29).

During the 19th century, R. Leech, the English traveller who met the Day Chopan Hazaras, was taken by them to Gereshk, a nearby town, to visit the tomb of Amir Choupan, whom they regarded as having first brought their ancestors to the area (1845: 333). The Behsudis, another major Hazara tribe, are named after Behsud or Bisud, one of Changiz's relatives, also known as Jigou Hakou (Faiz, 1912, Vol. 3: 887; Orazgani, 1913: 56).

There is an interesting expression among the Hazaras in Afghanistan, which may be of some anthropological significance: Hazara parents use the term Moghul as an adjective when teaching their children manners, for example: '*Oh bachah, moghol beshi*' or '*oh bachah, moghol bokhor*' ('Sit like a Moghul', i.e. sit properly, or 'Eat like a Moghul', i.e. eat properly). The term *moghol* is used in everyday speech by the Hazaras as an adjective meaning 'well-behaved', 'decent' or 'polite'; its antonym is '*namoghol*'. Such usage is unique to the Hazaras and is not to be found among the Tajiks, Uzbaks or other Farsi speakers in Afghanistan (Ferdinand, 1959: 38).

Finally, the word *Hazara* is said, as previously mentioned, to be the Farsi equivalent of the Moghul word *ming* or *mingan*, meaning 1000. The Moghols divided their troops into groups of ten: *dah*, hundred: *sad*, and thousand: *hazar*. Expressions such as *dah bashi* (leader of a group of ten) and *sad bashi* (leader of a group of 100), *bimaristan-e sad bestar* (100-bed hospital), commonly used in Afghanistan today, are very probably taken after these military Moghul divisions.

According to Saif Herawi (1943: 162, 163), the terms *hazara* and *sada* were first used as military expressions in Farsi during the mid-13th century. These divisions also referred to nomads led by local feudal lords and Khans, who were called up during wartime to make up troop numbers to 1000 per division. Each of these groups was in turn divided into smaller groups of 100 men, called *sadajit*, the term



used by Iskandar Beg Turkman to refer to the country of the Hazaras. Thus, in his view, the formation of the Hazaras as a nationality can legitimately be dated back to around the mid-14th century. It was only at this time that the Hazara people appeared and were recognised as a distinct people, referred to by name by their neighbouring peoples, evolving and expanding in time into the inhabitants of central Afghanistan. Herawi's views have unfortunately, however, nowhere been confirmed or supported by relevant documentation, and rely for the most part on the theory of the Moghul origin of the Hazaras, the weaknesses of which have already been discussed. Many Hazara scholars hold interesting views on the question of the choice of the name *Hazara*, none of which coincide with the Moghul theory (Orazgani, 1913: 42–6; Foladian, 1965: 93–5; Yazdani, 1989: 137–42).

The theory of the Hazaras as descendants of the Moghols is one that has been accepted by most Western scholars and specialists on Afghanistan, such as E. F. Fox (1943), W. K. Fraser-Tytler (1950), E. E. Bacon (1951), W. Thesiger (1955), and G. K. Dulling (1973), and certain Afghanistani scholars such as Sayed Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (1901). Also of interest is the opinion of the Hazara people themselves. They believe they are the descendants of the Moghols and have taken steps, since 1965, to confirm this, through organizations such as *Tanzeem-e Nasl-e Now-e Hazara* based in Quetta, Pakistan.<sup>11</sup> This was set up by Hazaras exiled to the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) of India at the time of the reign of Abdur Rahman (1880–1901). It is widely believed by the Hazaras in Pakistan that not only are the Hazaras descendants of Moghul soldiers, but that Changiz Khan is in fact their direct forefather. As proof of this, Shaikh Nasir Ansari has produced and printed an ancestral tree tracing the Hazaras back to Changiz Khan himself (see Appendix 1). This could be regarded as further support for the above theory.<sup>12</sup> The Hazaras of central Afghanistan also consider themselves to be descendants of Moghul soldiers (Ferdinand, 1959: 37). There even exists, among Hazara Sayyeds, a popular saying used when abusing: 'O *Choucha-e Changiz*' (Oh son of Changiz).

A group of scholars among those favouring the theory of Hazaras as Moghols maintain that the Hazaras are actually the descendants of the Nikoudari soldiers and not of Changiz Khan's.<sup>13</sup> W. Barthold writes:

The invasion of mountainous regions and peaks presented the Moghols with great difficulties. Consequently, troops and



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soldiers were left in these areas; in time adopting the language of the native people. It is likely that these first settlers were in time joined by later Moghol invaders. Identified by the name of their Khans; the most famous of these were the Nikoudaris (under the command of Nikoudar), who settled in these areas at the time of Chaghatai in the 13th century. (1930: 55)

Dulling proposed a similar theory:

It seems fairly certain that Mongol settlement began as military policy under the Il-Khans in the 13th century. It continued sporadically, either by design or by choice, until the final breakup of the Jagatai Khanate by the Shaibanids in the 16th century.

When the Mongols first settled in the Ghorat, in about 1240, they were taking over a sadly depopulated area. The entire Ghorid army, together with its allies, Turkmen and Khalaj tribesmen, had been annihilated by the Mongols, and by factional strife, in 1221; of the original population little remained. (1973: 13)

Professor Petrochevski is also of the opinion that the Hazaras are descendants of the *Nikoudar* Moghols. He believes it is possible to prove, using various sources, that the Moghols who lived in large numbers in Iran and neighbouring areas were the descendants of soldiers left after each victory (1975: 41, 42).

Other supporters of the theory of the Hazaras as Moghols believe them to be not of Moghol origin alone, but rather of Turko-Moghol origin. They believe the Hazaras to be descendants of Moghol and Turkish soldiers, who came to Afghanistan at different times, with Changiz Khan and Amir Timur respectively, and settled; during the following several centuries a new people, the Hazaras, came into being. Thus, the Hazaras are neither just Moghols nor Turks, but a mixture of the two. Bernhard Dorn suggests that the gradual relocation of the Hazaras is due to waves of attacks by the Moghols and the Turks during the 13th–15th centuries on central Afghanistan; mainly during the time of Mangoqa'an and Arghoon Khan (1284–91) (1829: 67–71).

Klaus Ferdinand, who considers the above perspective as the most likely, writes:

They [the Hazaras] are mongoloid in type, speaking a Persian dialect with a considerable sprinkling of Turkish and purely

Mongolian words. They are of Mongolian, or rather Turko-Mongolian origin, possibly deriving from various invasions in the course of the Middle Ages (Bacon, 1951, p. 24), but it was not until about the year 1500 that they definitely appeared in their present area under the name of Hazara (see Baburnama). (1962: 126)

Elizabeth Bacon also agrees with the theory of the Turko-Mogholi origin of the Hazaras in preference to the purely Mogholi origin:

The foregoing resume of Mongol history in Afghanistan shows that the traditional statement made by modern writers concerning the origin of the Hazaras is incorrect. The available evidence indicates that while several expeditions were made into Afghanistan by the armies of Chinggis Khan, the troops withdrew again as soon as the object of the campaign had been accomplished. There is no suggestion that Chinggis Khan himself left any permanent garrisons in the region, although he may have paved the way for future Mongol settlement by killing off part of the former population of the mountain area.

The region now known as the Hazarajat seems to have been peopled chiefly by Chagataians from Transoxiana. Other Mongols, and some Turks or Turko-Mongols may have joined these Chagataians. Troops stationed in Khorasan by the Ilkhans revolted against their monarch on more than one occasion, and it is possible that some of these rebels sought refuge in the central mountains of Afghanistan, where they could more easily avoid possible punitive expeditions. Later, under Timur and his son Shah Rukh, troops and administrative officials were sent into the area, and it is probable that some of these remained when the Timurids returned to Samarkand.

Thus it would appear that the present Hazara Mongols are descended, not from military garrisons planted by Chinggis Khan, but from Mongol troops, many of them Chagataian, who entered Afghanistan at various times during the period from 1229 to about 1447 AD. (1951: 241).

Sykes (1940, Vol. 2: 80–91) and *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1960, Vol. 1: 297) also maintain that the Hazaras are the mixed descendants of the Turko-Mogholi war settlers, who built and settled in army bases in central Afghanistan.

### **1.3 The Hazaras as a mixed race**

According to this theory, the Hazaras are not the descendants of Turks and Moghols or Moghols only, rather they represent a mixture of these and other races, such as Tajik, Afghan, and so on. While it is true that in most places, the Moghols made a point of totally annihilating and destroying the population of conquered areas, sometimes building in their place garrisons in preparation for future attacks, when faced with the total surrender of the local people they appeased themselves with booty and spoils instead. Furthermore, while Moghol and Turkic soldiers may have replaced the annihilated populations in many parts of central Afghanistan, they would have inevitably fallen under the influence of their Persian neighbours, from whom they may have adopted Farsi as their language, along with a more settled mode of life. Indeed, the Farsi spoken by Hazaras today bears a clear resemblance to that spoken in Herat and Mashhad and the original natives of the area,<sup>14</sup> as does the language and culture of Turko-Moghols. Thus, it is possible to conclude that between the 13th and 15th centuries the Hazaras emerged as a mixed people from the integration of several races and cultures such as the Turks, the Moghols, the Persians, the Arabs, the Afghans, and so on.

Such a theory was first put forward by H. F. Schurmann, in 1962. It is his finding that:

the Moghols form a separate and distinct group, at the present time related neither to Hazaras and Aimaqs. Similarly, there is no immediate relationship between Hazaras and Aimaqs. All three tribal groups: Moghol, Hazara, and Aimaq, form separate and distinct ethnic and cultural groups at the present time . . . I believe the Hazarajat Hazaras to be a mixed population formed by a fusion of an aboriginal Iranian mountain people with invaders of Mongol affinities. The lack of vestigial evidence of an anterior nomadic culture among the Hazarajat Hazaras would seem to indicate the culture influence of an aboriginal non-nomadic population, which could only have been Iranian, on the unquestionably nomadic or semi-nomadic invaders. (1962: 110–11)

According to Schurmann's theory, during the 14th century, the name Hazara also referred to the nomads inhabiting southeastern Iran and southwestern Afghanistan. It included other ethnic groups such as the Nikudaris, Nauruzis, Jurma'is, and even Afghans (ibid.: 27). In this

sense, Hazara no longer referred just to a particular ethnic group, race or tribe; rather it was used as a social term. Some of these nomads migrated towards the east during the time of Amir Timur and Babur; others such as the Nikudaris went toward Ghorat, still others into Hazarajat, moving along the Hilmand river towards mountains to the West of Kabul, so that it was not until during the reign of Babur, when a people called Hazara were formed.

Another of the proponents of the theory of the Hazaras as a mixed race is M. H. Kakar. Kakar, who rejects the theory of the Hazaras as purely Moghol or Turk, believes them to be descendants of Moghol soldiers, mainly Chaghatain, who entered Afghanistan at various times between 1229 and 1447, and formed the people now known as Hazara, in the 16th century. These soldiers, who were either unmarried or did not have their wives with them, married aboriginal Barbar (Tajik) women of central and neighbouring regions of Afghanistan. Inter-marriage with the Tajiks, who were of Iranian origin and spoke Farsi, influenced the language of these newcomers and laid the foundation for the new Farsi dialect known as *Hazaragi* (Kakar, 1973: 1–2).

According to Kakar then, the Hazaras are a mixed race of Moghols, Turks, Tajiks, and others who evolved into a new ethnic group and came to be known as the Hazaras during the period between the 13th and 16th centuries. Further proof of this can be found in various historical Farsi texts of the time. According to Jowaini 'the Mongolian forces engaged in conquering Afghanistan and Iran consisted of not only Mongols, but were primarily the sons of Tajiks and Turks' (1958, Vol. 1: 103). Jowaini's point here is that the Moghol soldiers who entered Afghanistan were themselves of mixed origins; it seems that Changiz and his successors recruited soldiers into their armies from fallen regions, as they proceeded in their conquests, for future invasions. Thus, the warrior-settler Moghol soldiers were themselves of mixed races rather than pure Moghol.

Perhaps the most authoritative and thorough study in this field is that carried out by Termikhanov. After reviewing and analysing different theories, Temirkhanov concludes that:

the Hazaras are the descendants of the inter-marriage of Moghol soldiers and the dominant native groups, the Tajiks, the Turks who had inhabited Afghanistan before the Moghol invasion, and to some extent, the Pashtuns or Afghans (and possibly Indo-Iranians), though not to the extent of Moghols and Tajiks. (1980: 25–6)

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Both Shurmann and Temirkhanov maintain that the Moghols, the Hazaras and the Aimaqs are independent and separate ethnic groups; no-one has yet succeeded in finding Mogholi-speaking Hazaras. With respect to the Turkish origin of the Hazara people, Faiz Mohammad writes that the Hazaras of Jaghouri themselves claim to be descendants of Amir Timur's soldiers, who were brought to Afghanistan under the command of the Timuri commander, Boutai Bouga (1912, Vol. 3: 1912–14). The tribe of Shaikh Ali also claim to be of Turkish origin and see evidence of this in the group among them known, to this day, as Turkman, led by the Arsaqals (ibid.: 391; Ferdinand, 1959: 23–4). Furthermore, members of the Sheikh-Ali tribe bear little resemblance to the Moghols. Among the ethnic groups forming the forefathers of the Hazaras were also the Khalaj and Qarloq Turks, who inhabited the area now known as central Afghanistan, before the Moghol invasion; the noticeable resemblance of some Hazaras to Khalaj and Qarloq Turks bears witness to this (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 727).

Marek Gawecki, another of the proponents of the theory of the Hazaras as a mixed race maintains:

Reassuming the hypotheses of the mixed origin of contemporary Hazaras seems feasible, since these concrete, convincing facts. Today hypotheses claiming the pure Mongolian descent of Hazaras or others implying that they are the primeval people of Hazarajat, are indefensible though they still linger in more or less serious publications. (1980: 165–6)

### **1.4 Criticism and conclusion**

The chapter so far has concentrated on the review of the various theories on the origin of the Hazaras, classifying them into three different groups in order to clarify and draw together the many diverse points of view. This classification will, I hope, also aid the task of criticism and conclusion. It is a fact that the gathering of data and the presentation of an accurate ethnographic account of a people is a very complicated task, more so when the question of origins is involved. Historical records are usually inadequate and oral tradition tends to reflect social aspirations rather than historical facts. This is also true in the case of the Hazaras of Afghanistan, as can be seen in the work of most scholars with an interest in the subject.



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This diverse theorizing has had several causes. First, much information about the Hazaras has been based almost solely on reports drawn up by agents of various countries with political interests in Afghanistan, such as Britain and Russia. Much of this is of doubtful academic value, and was intended for political rather than anthropological or historical purposes. Often these were based on information from Western and other foreign travellers and adventurers. Second, few of the scholars who have written about the Hazaras spoke Farsi or were familiar with the Hazaragi dialect, and so have always relied on interpreters or secondary sources, while some writers have never even visited the Hazarajat. Third, the monopoly of power, and racial discrimination, by the Pashtun people against the Hazaras over the past 200 years have not only led to a lack of political and economic development in the Hazarajat, but also to a lack of cultural and historical cohesion in Afghanistan, making socio-historical findings on the country misleading. Fourth, systematic and academic research on the history of the Hazaras is further complicated by the fact that much of what has been written on these people was incorporated into wider and more general studies on Iran, Afghanistan and India (and today's Pakistan). Since research on the Hazaras has never been approved of, let alone encouraged, by the ruling powers in Afghanistan, research carried out by Western scholars has been inevitably limited because of political problems on the one hand, and regional and tribal complexities on the other, all of which have contributed to making it virtually impossible for foreign scholars to obtain permission to visit central Afghanistan for most of the past 200 years.<sup>15</sup> Fifth, because of continuous discrimination against the Hazaras by the central government, most of the first-hand and valuable political and historical documents available are safeguarded by various Hazara families and individuals, and so are simply inaccessible to most scholars.

I came across one instance of this in Quetta, Pakistan, in 1982. At a reception given by one of the Hazara leaders in Quetta, my host told me in confidence that he had documents, hand-written by his ancestors, left to him from the time of Abdur Rahman, with strict instructions that they never be revealed. He also mentioned that he knew of the existence of several other similar original documents held by Hazaras inside Afghanistan. Thus there is much about the history of Afghanistan and in particular the history and identity of the Hazaras that remains unrevealed and unknown to this day. My host briefly confided to me that the documents in his possession gave proof

of the confiscation of property from the Hazaras by the Pashtuns, receipts of taxes collected in cooking oil, cash, etc., and decrees made by Abdur Rahman against the Hazara people. Similar documents discovered recently, hand-written by Mulla Faiz Mohammad Hazara, and kept by his son Ali Mohammad and his grandson Feda Mohammad, have been published in part in Iran.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, it is a fact that very little work at all has been carried out on Afghanistan by Afghanistani scholars. What little work has been done is unfortunately based, for the most part, on analyses of (and is no more than) the repetition or review of works by Western scholars, whose own shortcomings have already been mentioned. Consequently, little if any original or academically reliable work exists by social scientists from Afghanistan. This, in my opinion, is the most significant reason for the existence of diverse theories and inconclusive social scientific research, in particular in the field of anthropology and ethnology, on Afghanistan. The reasons mentioned above are no doubt not entirely exhaustive, but nevertheless appear to me to be the main ones for the lack of coherent and accurate theories in the work of social scientists on Afghanistan. When dealing with the origin of the Hazaras, in particular, most scholars simply resort to repeating existing views and assumptions and are often satisfied with a brief description of the Hazaras as 'descendants of Moghol soldiers'. It is rarely clear even which particular branch of this theory the scholar agrees with, or why. I, for my part, shall end this chapter by criticising and pointing out the weaknesses of each theory.

The theory of the autochthonicity of the Hazaras, which represents a kind of Popperian 'poverty of historicism', is incomplete in several respects.<sup>17</sup> The advocates of the autochthonicity theory of the Hazaras appear more pre-occupied with word-games than proper scientific research. An example is Habibi's linguistic hypothesis regarding the word Hazara on the basis of words with similar sounds. Although in the hand of the expert linguist, for example, Morgenstierne (1926), the relationships between sounds and words *can* be established and provide valuable data, similarity of sounds in itself does not constitute anthropological or linguistic evidence. If it were so, then one could start drawing parallels between *Pashto* and *Poshta* (Farsi for hill), for example: they both sound similar and have two syllables. Reliance on sound similarities to reach historical conclusions can be dangerous and misleading, contributing more to the confusion of ethnographic issues, by making unfounded associations, rather than to their clarification.

Even if *Ho-za-la* and *Ha-za-ra* were one and the same originally and have evolved over time, this again does not in itself provide proof of anything. Because once again, our conclusion is based on one assumption only and is unjustifiable without further documentation, such as the vast body of literature available in Farsi and Arabic, written over the past fourteen centuries, on the people, socio-economic structure, and characteristics of the region.

Habibi also fails to clarify one point: is the name *Ho-za-la* or *Ha-za-ra* the name of a place or of a people? For one inevitable question arises: if Hazara is the name of the people, what then is the name of the region? For Hazarajat does not in Farsi refer to any particular area, nor to any particular ethnological group. Indeed, the ordinary Hazara rarely uses the name Hazarajat;<sup>18</sup> the name is mostly found in reference books on the geography of the area. Hazarajat is a composite name made up of *Hazara* and the Farsi-Arabic plural suffix, 'jat', *Hazara* + *jat* = *Hazarajat*. Other examples of this are commonly found in Farsi, e.g., *sabzijat*: *sabzi* = vegetable or herb: *sabzi* + *jat* = vegetables or herbs; although linguistically incorrect, such names are commonly used in everyday Farsi. *Hazara* itself is a social term, which has, with time, found its way into the Farsi language and literature. Let us now see how the ordinary Hazara uses the term and what he means by it:

*Ma Azra yum* = I am Hazara

*Az Azra amadom* = I have come from Hazara country

*Azra moroom* = I am going to Hazara country

*Azra goo* = The Hazaras

*Azragi tora koo* = Speak in Hazaragi (Hazara dialect).

As we can see, the correct Hazaragi pronunciation of the name is 'Azra', a two-syllable word. Furthermore, we see that the name is used both as the name of the people and of the region. I do not wish here to enter into a linguistic debate, but simply to point out the inconclusiveness of such an argument. Furthermore, as pointed out by Temirkhanov, there is no similarity between the name Hazarajat and ancient names of the region (1980: 10), indicating another inconsistency in the theory of the autochthonicity of the Hazaras, on which Habibi bases his linguistic analysis.

Finally, linguistically speaking, what is the explanation for the presence of the roughly 10 per cent of Mogholi words in the language of the Hazaras alone, and its absence in the languages of the other peoples of the area? For it was the entire area constituting present-day

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Afghanistan and Iran which came under the direct invasion of the Moghols.

The theory of the Moghol origin of the Hazaras, like the autochthonicity theory, appears to be based more on non- or ill-documented assumptions and guesswork than anything else. The advocates of this theory have taken a very simplistic approach, implying that the history of the region does not pre-date the Moghols. Here again, different writers have ignored the great body of documentation available in Farsi and Arabic, and have made do with their limited knowledge of one or two texts and those in English translation. For example, the origin of the word *Hazara* and the existence of Hazaras as an autonomous, established ethnic group appears to date back much further than the mid-13th century. Some 1000 years ago, the great Farsi scholar and poet, Nasir Khosrau Balkhi (1988: 398) wrote:

*Hazaran qaul-e khob-o naghz-o barik,  
Azo yaband chon tar-e Hazara.*

Translation:

It is from wisdom that spring  
thousands of fine and thoughtful words,  
As does music from the strings of a Hazara *tar*.<sup>19</sup>

That the Moghols invaded today's Iran and Afghanistan is an historical fact; that the Hazaras bear great physical resemblance to the Moghols is beyond doubt. However, these alone are clearly insufficient grounds for classifying the Hazaras as Moghols. For one thing, it is not just the Hazaras who bear physical resemblance to the Moghols; the Uzbaks, Turkman and Kirghiz do too. For another, how can we explain the Hazaras of Panjab. Furthermore, the advocates of this theory fall into different categories. First, there are those who believe the Hazaras to be descendants of Changiz Khan's soldiers. This is highly questionable and unacceptable; no first-hand documents so far discovered confirm that either Changiz or his commanders ordered their troops to settle down in what is now the Hazarajat (Bacon, 1951: 241).

Second, those who believe the Hazaras to be descendants of Nikoudari soldiers and not of Changiz Khan's propose an equally unfounded theory. For the Nikoudaris first settled in the Hazarajat several years after Changiz's invasion, after being defeated at the hands of Timurlane's soldiers:

It was not until 1383, after invading Sistan, that Timur ordered his commanders Miran Shah and Amir Mohammad to attack the Nikoudaris, who at the time were in the Garmsir of Qandahar. (Temirkhanov, 1980: 21)

Thus, while it is true that the Nikoudaris have influenced the formation of the Hazara peoples, there is no evidence to suggest that they were their original ancestors. Nor is there enough evidence for the view that the Hazaras are a mixed race of Moghols and Turks only. Once again, while Moghol and Turkic influence in the formation of the Hazaras cannot be denied, it is not accurate to consider them as the original or only ancestors of the Hazaras.

A fundamental point in relation to Hazarology which must not be overlooked is that no document has as yet been found that makes any mention of 'Moghol Hazaras'; nor has any scholar come across Mogholi-speaking Hazaras. Of course, this is not to deny the influence of the Moghols on the Hazara peoples, for the dominant influence of the Moghols, Tajiks, and the Turks, more than any other peoples, is self-evident. However, as Schurmann points out, 'the Hazaras, Moghols and Aimaqs are three distinct peoples' (1962: 110; Iwamura and Schurmann, 1954: 280, 282). As such it is not correct to regard the Hazaras either as just Moghol or Turko-Moghol.

Finally, the lexicostatistical study by Michael Weiers suggests that 81 per cent of the vocabulary of Afghanistan's Mogholi is linked with the Uighuro-Mogholi languages (1975: 98–102). However, Weiers' study is only of a small section of the Hazaras, and is therefore limited in its findings; the Hazaras tend to differ from area to area as do their dialects, depending on the accent of their neighbouring peoples. For example, the accent of the Hazaras of Charkent and Darra-e Souf differs greatly from that of the Hazaras in Behsud, Orozgan, Turkman and Bamiyan, the former two having been much influenced by the Uzbek dialect through extensive social and other contact. Such influences often affect dress and way of life as well. For example, nowhere else would one come across *chapri*, a kind of summerhouse, other than among the Hazaras living North of the Hindu Kush, who have adopted the *chapri* for use in the summer from their Uzbek and Kirghiz neighbours. Such regional peculiarities inevitably create complications for any lexicostatistical study and must be taken into consideration. Weiers' findings must, for this reason, be studied with a certain amount of caution.



## *Who are the Hazaras?*

The theory of the Hazaras as a mixed race, while much more plausible than the above two, remains incomplete and ambiguous as it stands. On the one hand, it is of course possible to generalize such a theory to apply to virtually all ethnic groups worldwide (in opposition to the theory of 'pure race' as propounded by Nazi Germans, for example). On the other hand, the identity and role of the various mixed races said to make up the Hazaras are not clearly explored. For example, no mention is made of the historical geography of the region, and in particular of the identity of the ancient inhabitants of present-day Hazarajat. Nor is serious consideration given to the various migratory waves across Central Asia, Iran, Turkey and Northern India.

### **1.5 A new perspective**

All the above three theories on the origin of the Hazaras suffer from one major weakness. The weakness common to all three theories is their mistaken focus on the origin of the word *Hazara*, believing that by tracing the root and original appearance of the name, they will have traced the origin of today's Hazara people. Even Habibi, who favours the autochthonicity theory of the origin of the Hazaras, concentrates on proving the age of the word *Hazara* and not the people and their origin. So that, although Habibi ventures far back in linguistic history tracing the word, he does not venture any further than the proponents of the other two theories. With the effect that what he manages to prove more than anything else is the Pashtun origin of the word *Hazara*, which, as already mentioned, he believes to be an Aryan word meaning 'pure hearted' (Habibi, 1962: 8).

It is my contention, however, that we shall arrive at a much better understanding of the origin of the Hazaras only when we move our focus away from the name of the people inhabiting today's Hazarajat, and trace the region's older inhabitants. Any anthropological research on the ethnography of the peoples of the region requires a step-by-step academic journey back into, and along, the migratory patterns and ensuing geographic boundaries of the region. In order to do this we need to look into the ancient history of Bamiyan, centre of Hazarajat, and its ancient Buddha statues. Although archaeological and anthropological studies on the area are only at their preliminary stages, especially since there has been a halt in all such work in Afghanistan for the past two decades, existing Persian historical and literary texts, together with the findings of French archaeologists in the first half of this century in the area, can throw much light on the

history of the ancient civilization of Bamiyan (Godard and Hackins, 1993: 37–45).

Historically speaking, at least 1500 years before the incursion of the Moghols into Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), Buddhism reigned strong in southern Hindu Kush (Habibi, 1988: 7–10). As such it attracted thousands of Chinese pilgrims annually to Bamiyan. More significantly still, the region had for some centuries been the settling ground for generations of members of the so-called yellow race. Bamiyan valley, home of the famous Buddhas, was, during the first century (AD), one of Buddhism's flourishing centres. Bamiyan was at that time part of the Kushani Empire (40–220 AD) and under the influence of Indian Buddhist culture and religion. The Kushanis were originally of the Seti tribes, and inhabited the area stretching from Kashgar to the north of the Black Sea. The most easterly of the Seti tribes were called the Yuechi. The Kushanis were Yuechis, who had been driven to the land south of the Oxus river (today's Afghanistan's northern boundary) following tribal wars. Although the Kushani Empire collapsed in the northern Hindu Kush in 220 AD, they continued ruling in southern Hindu Kush until 425 AD (Ghobar, 1980: 46–9); Mo'in, 1985, Vol. 6: 1624).

But Buddhism had been introduced to the areas south of the Hindu Kush mountains by Buddhist monks in the third century BC. From the coins found in Bamiyan, the paintings on the temple walls and walls around the Buddha statues, the paintings of the last Kushani kings available, together with the physical features of the statues, it can be said that the inhabitants of the area were, until approximately 2300 years ago, of the same facial and physical features as today's Hazaras. Thus it becomes possible, if not irrefutable, to trace the Mogholi appearance of the Hazara inhabitants of northern Afghanistan much further back in history, long before the incursion of Changiz Khan and Amir Timur, whose appearance on the historical scene in this part of the world becomes relatively recent within this context.

The Ephthalites (425–566 AD), who succeeded the Kushani Empire, were also of the Seti tribes, with the same physical and facial features. It is also possible to extend the Ephthalite connection to the presence of Turkish words in Hazaragi: Al Biruni traces the Ephthalites back to the Tibetan Turks, and identifies their first ruler as Barha Tageen or Barah Tageen who was the first of no less than 60 successive rulers from the same line of descent (1958: 349). The last of the Tageen rulers were the Ghaznavids, who reigned in their capitol of Ghazni, in Khorasan, some 1000 years ago. The Ephthalites who, at

the time of the reign of the Sassanids, invaded Balkh and Khiva, gained access via Takharistan to Kabul and Zabul (today's Ghazni). In 420 AD, they attacked Iran and succeeded in conquering the whole of present-day Afghanistan, extending their rule to Kashmir and Central India. In time they mixed with the various peoples of these areas and gave rise to the Khavarazm people (Ghobar, 1980: 54; Alawi, 1975: 6; Habibi, 1988: 29). After the Ephthalites, the area south of the Oxus river came under the rule of central and east Asian Turkic dynasties, who ruled for over one thousand years. Clearly, during this period, today's Hazarajat will have been greatly influenced by these conquering peoples too.

As to Hazarajat's previous names, the oldest documented name for the area is Barbaristan. In Ferdousi's *Shah Nama*, the oldest written Persian text, Barbaristan is referred to as a strong and independent kingdom in the story of Kaykavus and the king of Hamavaran. After conquering Mazandaran (city north of today's Iran), Ferdousi narrates, Kaykavus ventures to Turan, China, Makran, and Barbaristan. Since the ruler of Barbaristan does not surrender, the Iranians, led by Godarz, are forced to attack, and succeed in conquering Barbaristan. From here, Kaykavus rushes to join Rostam in Zabulistan (Foroghi, 1975: 103).

Kaykavus was the second king in the Kayanian dynasty in Iran. Hamavaran was the land to the west of Iran, which the Arabs called Hamair. Turan was the kingdom on the other side of the Oxus river, that is today's Central Asian republics. Makran covered the areas in southern Iran, Afghanistan, and provinces southeast of today's Pakistan, known as Baluchistan. Zabulistan referred to the area north of Baluchistan, today's Ghazni province in central Afghanistan. Thus, it can be surmised that Barbaristan must have referred to the kingdom stretching north of Makran, south of Balkh, west of Kabulistan and Zabulistan, and east to Herat, that is today's Hazarajat. This theory is further supported by other available documents. Jaluddin Siddiqi cites Riaz Herawi:

Barbaristan is a mountainous kingdom, covered with grazing land and springs, with a cold climate. On the east, it stretches to Kabul and Ghazni, on the south to Ghorat and Qandahar, on the west to Farrah and Herat, and on the north to Maimana, Balkh and the rest of Turkistan. The entire kingdom is divided into fifteen provinces, two of which are known as Day Zangi and Day Kondi. (Siddiqi, 1987: 51)

Legend exists among the Hazaras still, dating back to the beginning of Islam (570–661 AD), of a cruel king who ruled in Barbaristan. One of Bamiyan's lakes, called Band-e Barbar and believed to have been built by Imam Ali, refers back to this legend (Siddiqi, 1987: 65–7).

The name Gharjistan probably came to replace Barbaristan after the introduction of Islam in Afghanistan, since 'Gharjistan' is the Arabic for the Persian 'Garjistan'. 'Gar' in Pahlavi Persian means 'mountain', and we know that Hazarijat is Afghanistan's most mountainous region. Arab geographers, who named the area Gharjistan, identified its first ruler of the Islamic era as Baraz Banda (Ghobar, 1980: 66). Much has already been written and substantiated by Arab geographers on Gharjistan and its physical boundaries (Shahristani, 1987: 22–42), according to which, today's Hazarajat coincides with this ancient land geographically to a great extent. We also know that after the Ghaznavid (962–1148 AD), the Turkic Saljuqi (1038–153), Ghorid (1148–214), and the Khawarazmi (1214–19) dynasties all ruled over Gharjistan, and that Turkish was widely spoken in Gharjistan:

and in the reign of Malek Shah Saljuqi (1072–92) a Turkish-speaking man from Gharjistan, called 'Anoush-Tageen Gharja', one of Malek Shah's courtiers, was given the title of '*Shahna*' [= military commander] of Khawarazm, and Mohammad, his son, became the governor of Khawarazm in the reign of Sultan Sanjar Saljuqi (1117–57). (Ghobar, 1980: 137)

Most interesting of all is that the name *Moghol* is itself new, for the Moghols were themselves Turks:

The *qaums* known at this time (1310 AD) as Moghols were not originally known as Moghol, but were given that name later . . . the Moghols were one of many Turkish *qaums*, . . . [It was] only after the multiplication of the Moghol peoples and their majority over other *qaums*, that the name 'Moghol' replaced Turk in usage, as had the name Tatar, previously, during the dominance of the Tatars. (Rashiduddin, 1959: 25–7; see also Dorn, 1829: 68)

This ethnic composition, most evident in language, religion, social structure and relations, is noted by Canfield:

The Indo-Aryan peoples who in ancient times occupied the region now called Afghanistan were invaded, mostly from the

north, by more kinds of people than anyone will ever count—peoples whose identities, if they are known at all, are only vaguely familiar to most of us: Seythians, Massagetae, Sakas, Dards, Huns, and Ephthalites. In the more recent past Arabs, Turks, Mongols, and Persians invaded the region. These many and diverse kinds of people passed through, hid in, or were trapped in this territory. And they left behind the melange of modern Afghanistan. (1986: 89)

Therefore, long before the appearance of the Moghols the inhabitants of today's Hazarajat were subject to the influence of more ancient peoples with similar physical features to the Moghols, and who spoke Turkic.

In the more recent past (after 1200 AD), the ethno-tribal mixture of the Hazaras with others can be described as follows. Moghol influence on the Hazaras is undeniable. Given the recurrent attacks by Moghol soldiers on the area, and the ensuing settlement among, and contact with, the people of this area of Central Asia, it is inevitable that the Moghols must have played a formative role in the culture and development of the Hazara people. These soldiers first spoke only Mogholi and their influence on the language of the Hazaras was very distinct, even up until the beginning of this century, and can be seen in many Farsi writings by Hazaras;<sup>20</sup> today more than 10 per cent of Mogholi terms are still used by the Hazaras.<sup>21</sup>

Tajik influence on the Hazaras is also undeniable, for the Tajiks were one of the oldest inhabitants of Afghanistan, and Farsi was their language. Many Tajiks still live among or in close proximity to the Hazaras; in Ghazni, Bamiyan and Panjshir, Tajiks and Hazaras live among one another. This peaceful co-existence has, over the centuries, resulted in the penetration of the Farsi language and culture among the Hazaras. Indeed, Farsi culture has played a fundamental role in the formation of the Hazara people. Hazara Khans built *durbars* or *dewans* resembling Persian palaces (Harlan, 1939: 130), and adopted education techniques from them; classical Farsi writings such as Ferdausi's *Shah Nama*, and poetical collections by Hafez and Sa'di, are perhaps studied with more fervour by them than by many other Farsi speakers (Temirkhanov, 1980: 25). Inter-marriage with Tajiks is still more common than with any other people, followed by inter-marriage with Uzbaks.

Turkish influence on the Hazaras dates back to the incursions of Amir Timur and his army into this area. As mentioned before, the



inhabitants of Jaghouri regard themselves as being descended from Amir Timur, while the Sheikh Ali Hazaras believe themselves to be of Turkish ancestry, most probably of the Khalaj and Qarloq Turks. Along the main road through the Sheikh Ali area and near Qalloq, there is a tomb in honour of Baba Qallogh, regarded by the Sheikh Ali people to have been their forefather. In the travelogues of Oghouz, the original ancestor of the Moghols, the people of this area are referred to as Qarloq, meaning the 'children of snow', because of its cold climate (ibid.: 23).<sup>22</sup> The common Turkish root of these names, *Qarloq*, *Qalloq* and *Qallogh*, is indicative of Turkish influence on the Hazaras. Indeed, more Turkish terms can be found in Hazaragi dialect than in Farsi, in particular among the names of herbs and roots, which are virtually all Turkish.

The Afghans (Pashtuns), neighbouring the Hazaras on the East, have also had their impact on the Hazaras. Abdali, the name of one of the major Pashtun tribes of Qandahar, also refers to one of the Hazara tribes of Behsud: the Abdal. Similarly, the Hazaras of Ragbandi end their names in *zai*, Farsi suffix, also used in Pashto to mean 'son of',<sup>23</sup> such as Dawzai and Mohammadzai of the Dai Choupan tribes. Pashto is also the name of a sub-section of the Polada [Foladi] Hazaras (Adamec, 1985, Vol. 6: 648), while the Pashayes or Pashai are also a sub-section of the Jaghouri Hazaras (ibid.: 647). The Pashtun nomads were also the first people in modern times to enter Hazarajat, with the permission of the central government in Kabul, in order to take up trade with the Hazaras. While this development was to bring about the destruction of existing economic, social and political relations among the Hazaras, it nevertheless opened up the closed trading and barter economy, and the generally feudal socio-economic system of the Hazaras.

Cultural amalgamation with Uzbaks has taken place as a result of the undefined nature of the boundaries separating the Hazara areas from Uzbek areas; this has led to the predominance of inter-marriage between the two peoples, which explains the similarity of appearance between the two groups. Relations with the Uzbaks have been at times both peaceful and bloody. In more recent times, inter-marriage between different peoples living in the same area has been a common phenomenon, encouraged in order to establish peaceful co-existence; this has been particularly the case between the Hazaras of Badghis and other peoples of Northern Afghanistan. During the first half of the 19th century, fusion took place as a result of inter-tribal feuds. While this was the case between all tribes in Afghanistan, it was

particularly frequent between the Uzbaks and the Hazaras. After defeat, the victorious tribe always took slaves. These were sold at slave markets such as the one in Kunduz, and sent to India for trading, or exchanged for Tatar horses, or used as farming labour and servants in the houses of Khans (Harlan, 1939: 82, 83, 126, 127).

Fusion has also taken place between Hazaras and Arabs, that is, Sh'ia Sayyeds, considered to be descendants of Imam Ali, himself related to the prophet by marriage to Fatima, the prophet's daughter. While marriage between Sayyed women and Hazara men is rare, inter-marriage with Hazara women is very common; hence, the existence of Sayyeds with Hazara features, referred to as Hazara Sayyeds.

On the basis of what has been said, it can therefore be concluded that the Hazaras : a) are one of the oldest inhabitants of the region; b) are of a mixture of races and ethnic groups, of which Changiz Khan and Amir Timur's Moghol soldiers are but one and relatively recent, and that c) Hazara tribal and linguistic structure has been much influenced by all these different peoples (in the same way as the influence of the Arabs on their religion and of Farsi on their culture). The ancestors of the Hazaras can be traced back to the Turkic inhabitants of central and eastern Asia, who had migrated from southern and northern Hindu Kush, more than 2300 years ago, to the area known today as Hazarajat. They had come from the south to spread Buddhism, and from the north on their route to conquering India. The Buddhist monks who brought Buddhism were probably from Nepal, Tibet and southern China, based on the artefacts found in Bamiyan valley. The Turkic language with its many accents and dialects was probably widely spoken in Bamiyan from pre-Christian times. Hazarajat was probably called in more ancient times dating back 2300 years by the names first of Barbaristan and later Gharjistan.



# Chapter 2

## Social structure

*kar ko da andaza, ke az dest-o pai nandaza.*  
Work to limit, so you do not cause yourself grief.

A Hazaragi Proverb



‘Social structure’ refers to:

the articulation of a set of clearly definable and directly observable social institutions which were considered to constitute the basic framework of the society concerned. (Leach, E., 1982: 32)

We have so far reviewed what is known of the history of the evolution of the Hazaras and arrived at a hypothesis as to their origin. Here, I should like to consider their social structure. A study of the social structure of the Hazaras offers significant and revealing features of their culture, particularly regarding the relationship between social relations and social structure.

### 2.1 Family

According to the model of the Chinese Box described earlier (p. 19), the Hazaras themselves constitute one such box, with the smallest component box being the family. According to Bacon:

The basic unit in Hazara society is the patrilineal patrilocal joint family. It normally consists of a man and his wife, unmarried children, and sons with their wives and children. This family occupies a common dwelling, or, occasionally for a chiefly family a series of adjacent dwellings, and the family owns jointly the dwelling, agricultural land, livestock, and tools and equipment. (1951: 16).

In the case of the Hazaras, the family actually often consists of several nuclear families living together, a unit even larger than the 'joint family', called *khanawar* (Bacon, 1958: 10) or *dudrau*.<sup>1</sup> In many instances, as well as including the families of sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, the Hazara family includes families of other peasants and servants who have no kinship link with one another. Often the families of landless peasants are considered to be part of the landlord's family with whom they live and eat jointly, and who are all under the supervision of one elder head of family. For example, marriages of members of such landless peasant families must be approved of by the head of the landowning family with whom they live. Although regarded as members of the same family, these landless peasants and their families are not actually relatives of the original family. Often in-laws of these landless peasants also join the original family. At times, this is as a result of inter-marriage between members of the adopted landless peasant family and of the original family; at other times this is for purely economic reasons. Thus, 'joint family' is not a totally accurate term for such families, and a more accurate sociological term would perhaps be 'compound' or 'multi-' family, or 'joint household', a term I consider to be the most accurate description of the structure of Hazara families (Canfield, 1973b: 40). There are thus three different types of family structure among the Hazaras: the 'nuclear family', the 'joint family', and the 'compound' or 'multi-family'. When talking of 'the family' in general terms, I refer to all three.

Several Hazara families make up a larger unit called the *Tol*, *Tolwar*, or *Tolwara*. Every *Tol* has its own chief, known as the *Malik*. The *Malik*, who represents the families in his *Tol*, has no official position, but is simply the head of one of the families, and is socially accepted as the head of the *Tol*, and recognized to be in charge of settling family disputes. Several *Tols* in turn make up a *Tayefa*, a more complex unit than the *Tol*, consisting of a network of social and economic relations. Every *Tayefa* has a head, known as the *Arbab* or *Khan*,<sup>2</sup> whose links with the families are through the *Maliks*, who in turn, refer any problems back to the *Arbab* or *Khan*. The *Arbab* or *Khan* is generally prosperous and enjoys a high socio-economic status.

The highest unit in the social hierarchy of the Hazaras is the *Qaum*, made up of a conglomeration of several *Tayefas*. *Qaum* is a more complex network of relations than the *Tol* or *Tayefa*, covering political, social, economic, military and cultural relations (see Figure 1). It is perhaps for this reason that in political and literary texts, the



## Social structure

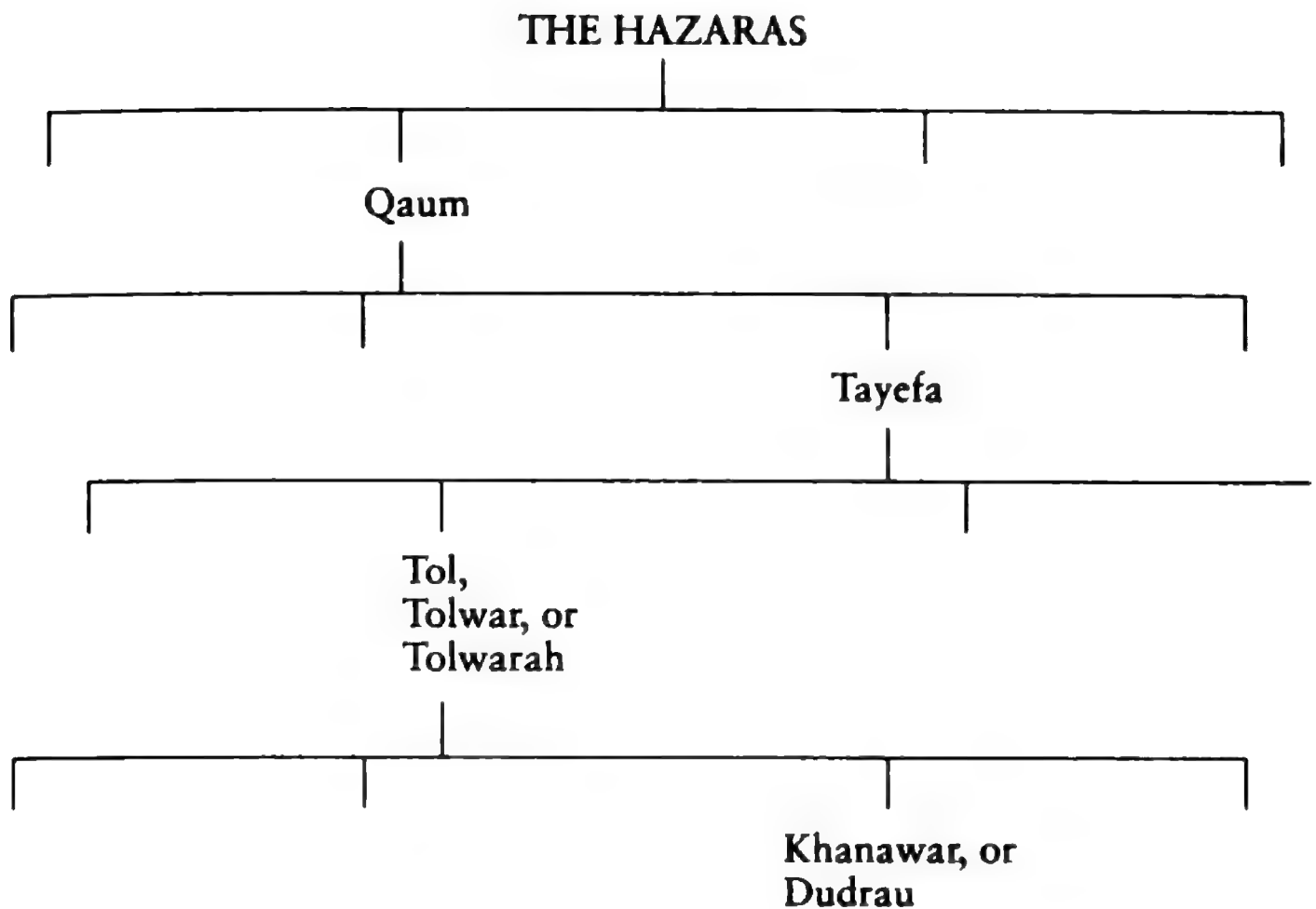


Figure 1 The Socio-ethnic Structure of Hazara Society.

Hazaras are sometimes mistakenly referred to as a nation.<sup>3</sup> While *Qaum* and nation are very similar, they do not constitute the same thing. Today, nationhood no longer requires only language, history and religion, but also and most importantly a centralized government. While the Hazaras have, at various points in their history, nearly achieved the state of nationhood, they have not as yet managed to do so fully. *Qaum*, an Arabic word, is synonymous with 'nation'; however in Afghanistan it is used to refer to a smaller unit, and the term *millat* is used instead to mean 'nation' (e.g. *millat-e Afghanistan*, not *Qaum-e Afghanistan*).<sup>4</sup>

In the past, every Hazara *Qaum* had its own powerful leader known as the *Beg*, *Mir* or *Sultan*, of which *Mir* was the most influential. Until 1893, *Mirs* regarded themselves as being on a par with the Amirs, Kings and Emperors of Kabul, Iran, China, Russia and India, and the Hazarajat, as an independent nation.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that the term *Sultan*, which is Arabic for Emperor, was chosen for this reason, as indeed the term *Mir* is an abbreviation of *Amir* which in Arabic means political leader of a nation, or 'commander' (*Amir* = giver of *amr*, or command). *Amir* was the first title given in Islam to

the four Caliphs who succeeded Mohammad. Until the reign of the Omavids the Muslims continued to refer to their leaders as *Amirul Mo'menin* (the commander of believers). The same tradition also existed in Hazara society. The head and elder of a *Qaum* not only represented his *Qaum*, but was actually in charge of all the affairs of his people. As Harlan relates about Mir Mohammad Rafee, the *Mir* of Day Zangi, who replies to Harlan's concern over the reaction of the people to the presence of a foreigner:

I am master of the lives of my people and if I chose to sell them all to Uzbeks not one of them would dare oppose my will! They are all my slaves! (1939: 137)

The head of a *Qaum* has, in the past, either been in full control of the social, economic and political life of his people, or has enjoyed much more limited power, depending on the social structure of each *Qaum*. As among other social divisions, competition and rivalry among the Hazara *Qaums* often led to the domination of several *Qaums* by one, and the emergence of a higher, more powerful social leadership. The most recent example of such a leader was Yousof Beg of Malestan, who was still alive in the 1960s and was in supreme command of several *Qaums* and commanders, with his own armed guard and fortified castle. He owned much land and is said to have had thirty-three wives and many more children. He was literate and is said even to have made the pilgrimage to Karbala to the tomb of Imam Hussain.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Hazaras were generally unable to unite under a single leader, as the Pashtuns did (this will be discussed in detail later on), they lived almost entirely autonomously until the end of the nineteenth century, enjoying a sophisticated mercantile economy and military strength, making their society one of the most advanced feudal societies in the region at the time. All of this, however, ended with the Hazara-Afghan wars of 1890–93, after which the Hazaras were forced into slavery and their leaders killed, allowing the Afghans to impose political leadership on them for the first time. The situation changed once again after the 1978 coup, when all of Hazarajat was liberated and taken out of the control of the central Kabul government, after which the Hazaras once again returned to their own tribal system of political structure, giving rise to a whole new group of traditional tribal leaders such as *Arbabs*. One such leader was Arbab Gharibdad in Behsud, who exercised full control over the political and social life of his people; other examples are leaders in

Yaqaulang and Charkent. This return to tribal life was also simultaneously witnessed in Iran, where Beck says:

Many Qashqa'is rapidly reassumed nomadism when the Pahlavi regime collapsed in January 1979. With loss of government control, the Qashqa'i asserted their political autonomy and in particular their rights to use customary pastures. (1981: 266)

Hazara leadership structure has been in the form of *Shura-ye Ittifaq*, where an institution known as the *Ulus* was set up in order to participate or deal with the most significant social and personal decisions of the Hazaras. While the *Ulus* is comprised of ordinary Hazaras, its major constituents are tribal and religious leaders. The location of the *Ulus* is dependent on the season and the issues to be discussed in that particular session. If held in the spring or summer, the *Ulus* is usually held in the open air, while winter and autumn meetings are held in the homes of important members, mosques or *Takiyakhanas*. The size of the *Ulus*, that is, numbers participating, also depends on the importance of the issue being decided. For example, if the problem is at the family or village level, the *Ulus* is usually composed of only a few local people. However, if a more important issue is being discussed, such as tribal conflicts, many more participants will be present, and the *Ulus* may last several days. It is customary for those requiring the *Ulus* decision to pay for and host the meeting, unless it is a big *Ulus*, in which case members from all villages present will contribute towards expenses.

The actual physical formation of the *Ulus* is as follows. The members (elders and elected representatives) sit in a circle (if few in number) or around the room. The elders, usually Sayyeds or Mullas, sit at the top of the room, while the members of the two opposing sides sit on either side, facing one another (in criminal cases, those accused are placed in the centre of the room and interrogated). Investigation into the grievance or complaint at hand is begun by one of the elders, while all present are given the opportunity to ask questions and voice their opinions. The participants in the *Ulus* can thus be classified as follows:

- (a) leader or chairperson in charge of the *Ulus*; usually an unaffiliated individual or individuals of high social standing,
- (b) members of either side,
- (c) servants of the *Ulus*.

Any individual considered to be wise, trustworthy and respected by the villagers can take part in an *Ulus*. The *Ulus* can have different

compositions: either tribal or local, limited to just one village or including members from several villages or tribes. Should a small *Ulus* be unable to resolve the problem brought to it, a large *Ulus* will be formed. The largest *Ulus* was set up after the British invasion in 1839:

In this year the people of all of Hazarajat were forced to form a public meeting in order to discuss the invasion of Afghanistan by the English; in which the leaders of all *Tayefas* and *Qaums* took part. (Temirkhanov, 1980: 62–3)

The *Ulus* was used for many different levels of decision-making ranging from tribal, personal, marital and matters of inheritance, to military affairs, such as the defence of the Hazarajat, drafting of soldiers, financial problems, dealing with Uzbek and Afghan leaders, and even wider issues such as the sovereignty of Afghanistan. Today, the *Ulus* still exists among the Hazaras and could be said to operate more effectively than the bureaucratic machinery of Kabul. The word *Ulus* is of Turko-Moghol origin and so a Hazaragi word, and not Pashto as is mistakenly believed; the same is true for *Ulushi Jirga*.<sup>7</sup>

Today many changes have taken place in the leadership structure of Hazara society. It has altered in keeping with other changes in Hazara social structure. Over the past decade religious leaders have gained more power than ever before, to the point where the *Arbabs* regard them as rival leaders. However, in times of crisis, these religious and tribal leaders have come together to co-operate in dealing with socio-political problems. The best example of this co-operation was the organization of the *Shura-e Ittifaq-e Inqilab-e Islami* (Unity Council of the Islamic Revolution) in 1979. The *Shura-ye Ittifaq*, led by Sayyed Ali Beheshti, was the most powerful single political force within Hazarajat until 1983 and was able during that period to bring together the majority of the Hazara population under its sole leadership. It controlled most cities and administrative centres, had its own local leaders, judges and courts, received taxes from merchants and shop owners, issued travel permits and attended to the people's personal problems. At the start of the war of resistance in Afghanistan, the *Shura-ye Ittifaq* was the single most organized force in Hazarajat, providing its fighters with uniforms, facilities, and unprecedented organization. Before the advent of inter-group conflicts, the forces of the *Shura-ye Ittifaq* were doubtless the most organized resistance group in the whole of Afghanistan. The significant success of the *Shura-ye Ittifaq* was due to its support of traditional Hazara society and values. Eventually, however, the emergence of new political forces supported by Iran, which led to the

increase of Shi'a inter-group conflicts, gradually brought about a reduction in the power and influence of the *Shura-ye Ittifaq*.

Since the 1978 coup, and the liberation of Hazarajat areas, Hazara society has undergone rapid and extensive changes. Now, for the first time, the Hazaras enjoy organized political representation and Parties. Today there are two main political Parties and about 20 Hazara NGOs active in the Hazarajat. While it is too soon to judge the nature and consequence of these changes in Hazara political organization, it is possible to say that these changes are bound to be of far-reaching (for more on the Hazara politics in the 1980s and 1990s see Chapters 7 and 8).<sup>8</sup>

## 2.2 Geneology

The backbone of Hazara society is genealogical relations. Every individual member of a family is genealogically related to a *Tol*, *Tayefa* and *Qaum*. The further removed a family is from its ancestors, the less clear this genealogical link becomes. Among the Hazaras, few can trace their ancestors back more than seven or eight generations, especially the younger Hazaras. Some who are able to trace their genealogy back further, keep a written record of it. Much of the genealogical, economic and social records of the Hazaras has, however, been destroyed, either as the result of massacres carried out at the time of Abdur Rahman (1891–93), or as Bacon (1951: 20) points out, at the time of the 1932 rebellions.

One of the best examples of the existence of this genealogical link is found in the Valley of *Sar-e Chishma*, one of the most beautiful regions of Afghanistan, and home of the famous *Sia Petau* apple. The Hazaras of this region are originally from Herat and are known as Timuri Hazaras. The valley covers many areas: Qala-e Sabz, Dahan-e Dar Bogha, Qala-e Aslam, Pusht-e Mazar, Gormak, Qul-e Khodai Dad, and Siah Khak. The inhabitants of Sar-e Chishma belong to the following *Tols*: Masa'ud, Shadkam, Sabz, Afghani, Shir Ahmad, Hassani, Malang, Islam, Gardi, Tari. Arab, Uzbek, Day Mir Dad, Dalta Mor, and Qezil Bash. According to Bacon the first seven are Timurid of which the Shadkam, Sabz, and Afghani belong to the Odil clan (1951: 20); although more recent research suggests they all are Timurid (Gharjistani, 1988: 52). Figure 2 demonstrate the genealogical structure of the Odil clan.

The genealogical structure of Hazara society can also be seen in the names of Hazara areas. For example, whole *Qaums* and their



## The Hazaras of Afghanistan

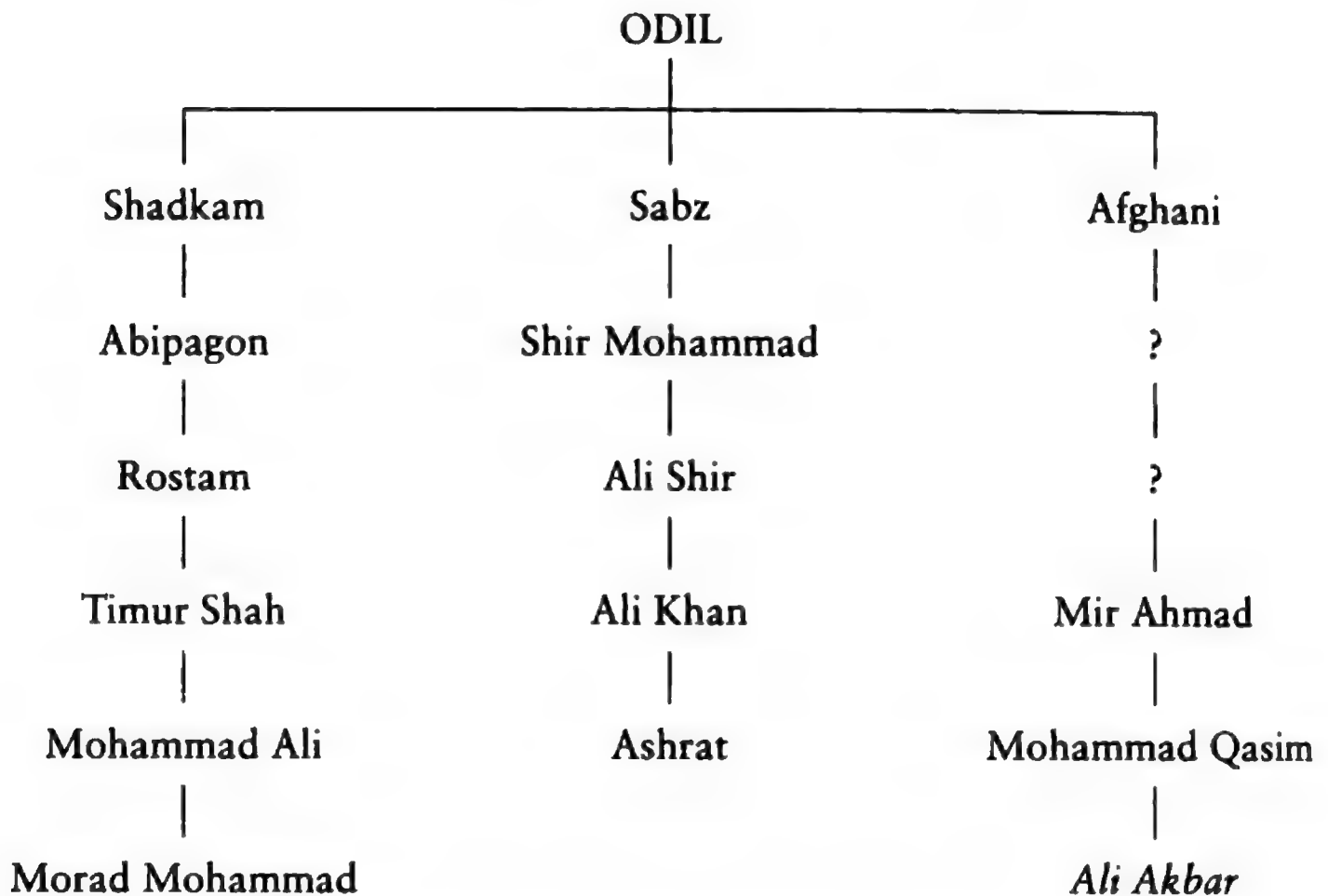
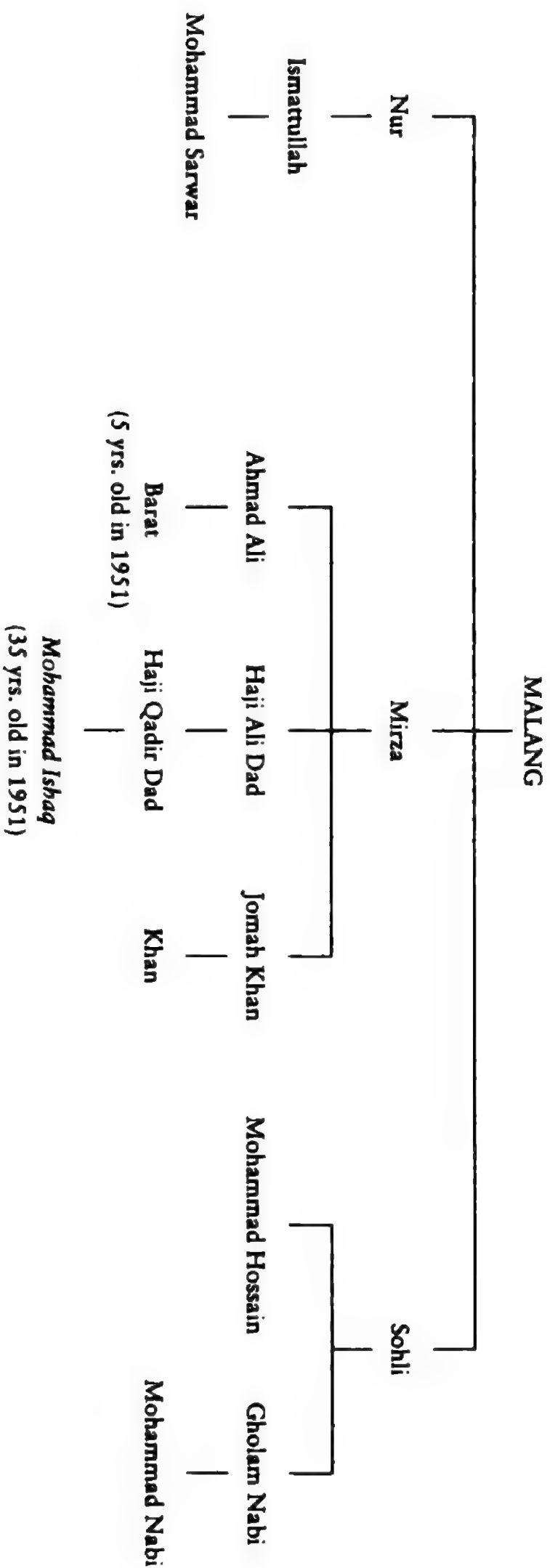


Figure 2 Genealogy of the Odil clan (*Qaum*).

From: E. Bacon, *The Hazara Mongols of Afghanistan: A Study in Social Organisation*, 1951: 24.

localities are often given the ancestral name of a leading family. Likewise, it is the children of the original forefathers who lead and name their *Tayefas* after themselves; the same is true of *Tols*. It is interesting to note that Hazara *Qaums* and *Tayefas* are named either after one individual, such as Day Choupan, or Behsud, with the consequence that all Hazaras can be traced back to Baba Behsud or Amir Choupan, or else after the area which they inhabit, such as the Hazaras of Shahrestan, Malestan and Jaghour. The place-origin of Hazara names does not automatically reduce the importance of genealogies in Hazara society, but is indicative of the extent of genealogical breaks and links among the Hazaras. This is most evident among the *Tayefas*: such as Mas'ud and Malang *Tayefas*, named after ancestors from whom the members are descended (see Figure 3). Some, however, are not named genealogically, but take their names from the areas they inhabit, such as the Hazaras of Posht-Band in Northern Afghanistan, who were unknown to most other Hazaras until recently. This latter group are descendants of Hazaras who were either enslaved by Abdur Rahman, or forced to leave Hazarajat by



**Figure 3** Genealogy of the Malang lineage (*Tayefa*)  
From: E. Bacon, *The Hazara Mongols of Afghanistan: A Study in Social Organisation*, 1951: 22.  
The name of the informant is italicized.

Pashtun nomads or central government forces in Kabul, and settled down in scattered groups in Northern Afghanistan; or else were nameless landless Hazara peasants serving Hazara feudal lords. Some are probably Hazaras who were encouraged to return to Afghanistan by Habibullah Khan and Amanullah Khan, after Abdur Rahman's death (1901), but who settled in areas outside their original localities. Those Hazaras forced off their lands by Abdur Rahman are, to this day, known as *fararis* (displaced persons), and inhabit mostly the Turkestan area of Afghanistan.

Genealogies are nevertheless important even among Hazara communities which have been named after their localities. However, these Hazaras cannot trace back their ancestors fully, because of a lack of recorded information; as mentioned, most lineages go back only seven to ten generations. In my illustrations I have tried to map out the genealogy of Hazara *Qaums* and *Tayefas*. Unfortunately, because of a lack of information this cannot be complete; as with other aspects of Hazara studies, ethnography is rather a new field and little researched. According to a popular expression in Afghanistan:

A Hazara without a *Day*, is as an Afghan without *zai*, which means that it is just as unthinkable to meet a Hazara who does not belong to a certain tribe, as it is to meet a de-tribalised Afghan. (Ferdinand, 1959: 13)

Most Hazaras believe that the majority of Hazara *Qaums* fall under this *Day* heading, but the accuracy of this is yet to be proven (Foladian, 1965: 88–90). What can be maintained with certainty is that *Day* is representative of a particular form of genealogical link. Nor is it certain whether *Day* is the name of the original ancestor of all Hazaras and all succeeding *Days* his children, or whether *Day* is the same as *Dah* (ten) or *Deh* (village) in Farsi. Klaus Ferdinand is of the opinion that:

It is commonly said that there should be ten *Day*'s. These are: Day Khitay (in Uruzgan), Day Mirkasha (Jaghori and to the west of Qarabagh and Ghazni), Day Barka (parts of which live in 'Pashay' in Jaghori), Day Folad (north of Uruzgan, west of Jaghori), Day Kundi (the large region bordering on the Aimaq area, southwest of Day Zangi), Day Zangi (south of the western part of Koh-i-Baba), Day Mirdad (east of Day Zangi and in Behsud), Day Dehgho (Dehqan) (eastern Behsud), Day Chopo (Chopan) (south of Jaghori), and Day Qozi the large region

north of Bamian, and Shibar, southern part of Qataghan). There exists at least an eleventh Day called 'Kalo' (Kalan) at the western upper end of the Ghorband valley, but this is only a subtribe of Sheik Ali . . . If this word could be connected with the *Day* which in Hazaragi means a stack of winter fodder or of bushes for fuel, in other words: things collected and placed together, has not been made out. If so, Day Kundi, for instance, could perhaps mean the 'lot of', or in Kundi, or the tribe of. (Kundi 1959: 14)

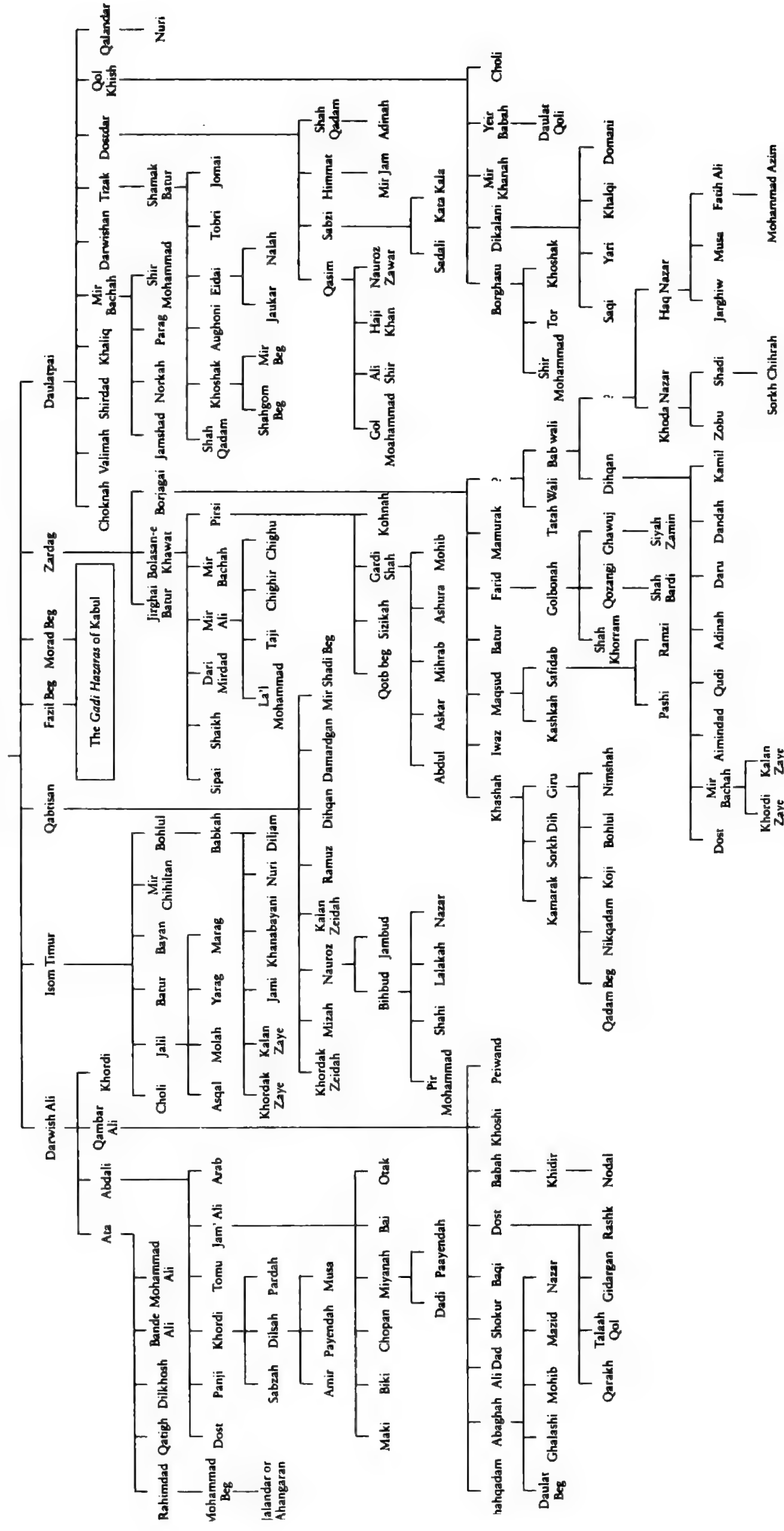
Much more work is needed before any definitive conclusions are reached as to the social and linguistic origin of the term *Day*; even Klaus Ferdinand's theory is more of a personal view of which he himself is unsure, and furthermore has been little documented.

There are also Hazara *Qaums* which do not fall under the *Day* heading, such as Sheikh Ali and Behsud. Behsud is one of the major areas of Hazarajat and the name of one of the biggest Hazara *Qaums*. It is said to have derived from the name *Baba Behsud*, whose tomb can be found at the top of *Quregh* mountain south-west of Kabul (see Figure 4). It is also said that at one point Behsud included Chahar Deh, in Kabul, but that in time it was taken away from the Behsud Hazaras (Gharjistani, 1988: 56). According to Bacon:

[The name of Behsud] appears in the thirteenth century Secret History of the Mongols, which traces the origin of the tribe. Vladimirtsov, mentions three Basut regiments in the army of Chinggis Khan: one composed entirely of members of the Basut tribe, and two others with Basut [Behsud] leaders but with a mixed following. In the time of Timur there was a 'horde of Bisoud' in Afghanistan near Kabul, that is, in the vicinity of the present home of the Behsud tribe. A modern sub-tribe of Besud is the Burgigui, a name strongly reminiscent of Borjigin, the medieval Mongol *oboq* to which Chinggis Khan belonged. (1951: 244–5).

Behsud is divided into two main regions: *hessa-ye awal* Behsud, with a surface area of 1,327 square kilometres, and 100 villages; and *hessay-e dowom* or *Markaz-e Behsud* with a surface area of 2,198 square kilometres and 303 villages, (Adamec, 1985, Vol. 6: 105–6). The *Qaum* of Behsud is composed of the following *Tayefas*: Doulat Pai, Pahlawan, Abdal, Chopan, Sak Pa, Deh Kan, Marg, Foladi, Khaliq Dadi, Qambar Ali, Dah Mard, Qaba To Dehqan, Darwish, Darab Ali,

## BABAH BEHSUD



**Figure 4** Genealogy of the Behsud clan (*Qaum*)

From: H. A. Yazdani, *Pozhohishi Dar Tarikh-e Hazara-ha*, 1989: 218-20.



Day Mirdad, Batour, and Khawat (Temirkhanov, 1980: 41). The man Behsud, who was the head of the *Qaum*, had many sons, one of whom is Qabtisu or Qabtisan from whom Behbud descend, the forefather of many Koh-e Beron Tayefas: Lalakah, Nazar, Shahi, and Pir Mohammad, who inhabit the areas around Khordakzai, Kalozei, Shahi and Jarghai. Another of Behsud's descendants was Zardag, who himself left three sons: Jarghai Batur, Bolasu, and Borjigai. Bolasu's sons were Pirsi, Mir Bachah, Mir Ali, Dari Mir Dad, Shaikh, and Sipai, each of whom headed their respective *Tols* and *Tayefas*, known today as the Mir Bacha, Mir Yalai, Mir Pir Nazar-e Pir Si, Pir Mohammad-e Se Pai, and Pang Pai, and who inhabit the Khawat area of Behsud and number some 5000 families (Yazdani, 1989: 216–20; Gharjistani, 1988: 62, 63).

Further proof of the genealogical structure of Hazara society is the Day Mir Dad *Qaum* (see Figure 5). As the name suggests and the Hazaras themselves believe, Mir Dad was the name of the great ancestor of the Day Mir Dad *Qaum*, whose fourteen children headed the fourteen Day Mir Dad *Qaums*: the Shawu, Darnaman, Chahwarchah, Silmo, Bombi, Darghan, Tolakhsha, Divgan, Nirkhi, Miru, Sadmardah, Islama, Jambughah, and Tolu. Each of these, in turn, divided into more branches, each of which made up a further *Tayefa*, for example the Tolakhshah divided into the Haiat, Daulatsha, Maqsud, and Alodal *Tayefas*; the Jombughah into the Qalandri, Pishkar, Mamad [Mohammad?], the Shawu into Sotah and Maria *Tayefas*. Each of them divide into new *Tols* and *Tayefas*, for example the Pishkar, into Faqir and Gorg and the Haiat, into Doti, Faiz, and Sargin (Yazdani, 1989: 218).

Although genealogical relations between generations are central to Hazara society, as with many other peoples, this long ancestral link has rarely been recorded in its complete form (see Appendix 1). However, despite the lack of documentation historical and geographical evidence, along with old Hazara legends and folktales preserved by the elders, suggest that the structure of Hazara society is primarily determined by geneology, thus confirming Bacon's theory (1958: 10).

### 2.3 Physical structure and environment

The significance of genealogy in Hazara society is also reflected in the physical structure of Hazara communities. *Navah* (valley), *Qaryah* (village), *Qol* (valley), *Qala* (castle), *Aghil* (hamlet), and *Qishlaq*

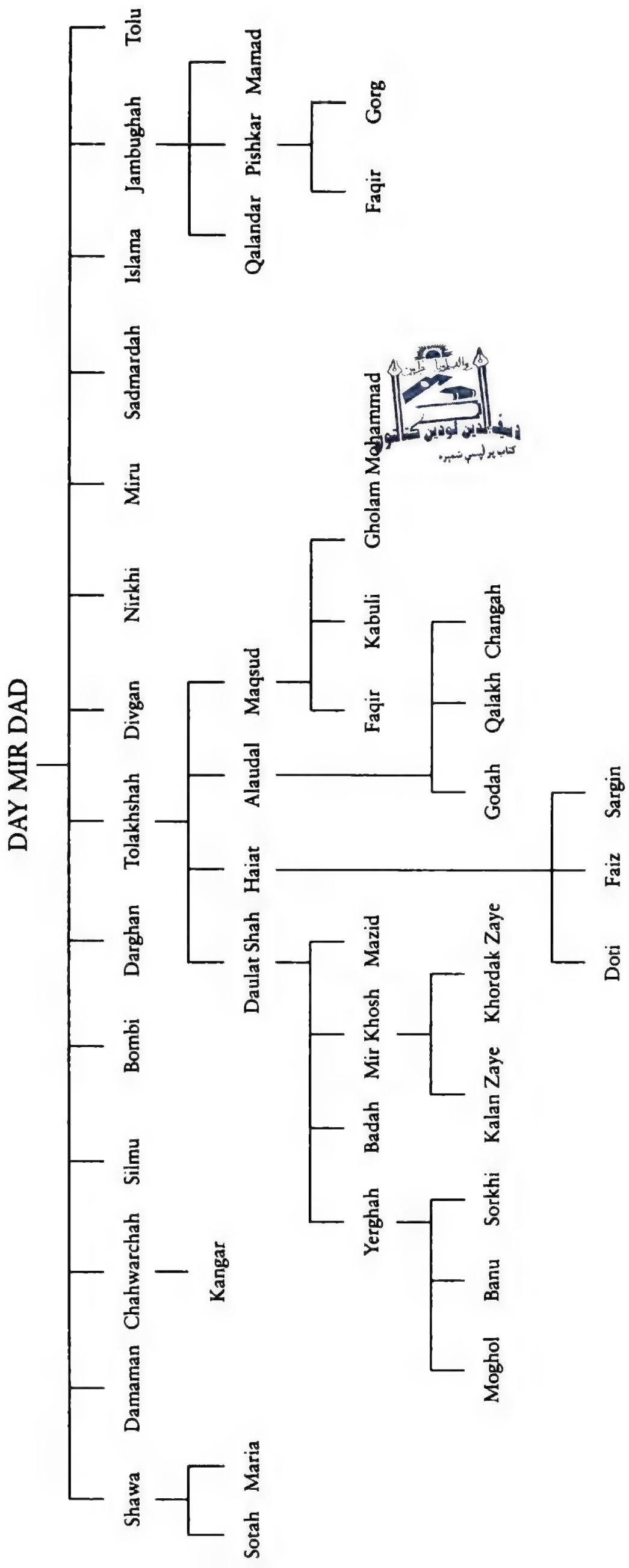


Figure 5 Genealogy of the Day Mirdad clan (*Qaum*).  
 From: Yazdani, *Pozhobishi Dar Tarikh-e Hazara-ha*, 1989: 218.

(village) are names used by the Hazaras to describe the physical structure of their society. Each *Navah* is comprised of several *Qaryah*; each *Qaryah* of several *Qol*, *Aghil* or *Qishlaq*, and each *Qol* or *Qishlaq* of several *Qala*. *Aghil*, referring to a 'sub-village' or 'hamlet', is seen mostly among the Hazaras in the North, for example, Dara-e Suf and Charkent. An *Aghil* is usually comprised of closely built mud houses, enclosed all around by a wall. The houses resemble those in the city, but are often much larger. They are perhaps more like *Qalas*; sometimes *Aghils* incorporate one or more *Qalas*. Thus, it is possible to say that the *Qala* constitutes the primary and principal unit in Hazara society.

A *Qala* normally houses several families. In some places several *Qalas* are built in a cluster, signifying a shortage of land and rapid population growth in that *Qaryah*, for *Qalas* are normally built apart, allowing room for arable land, drinking and running water, i.e., streams. *Qalas* usually have one large gate which is the entrance; and are between one and three storeys high. The rooms are divided into living space, guest rooms, a store for foodstuffs, a kitchen with a big clay oven, bathroom, toilet and stables. Toilets and bathroom are a very recent addition; even today many *Qalas* have outside toilets. The yard usually has stables for the horses and donkeys. *Qalas* vary in structure and style; those belonging to *Arbabs* or *Mirs* are large, more fortified and more beautiful, and often have a tower. Those responsible for building these *Qalas* are truly expert and talented craftsmen. *Qalas* are usually constructed not just according to defence considerations, but also to give the most pleasant views over the valley. The best room in the *Qala* is considered to be the room above the entrance gate, known as the *sarachah*, because it looks out of the castle, while the other rooms look into the castle enclosure. The materials used for building *Qalas* are mud, stone, wood and iron. A cluster of *Qalas* comprises a *Tol*.

A major influence on Hazara society has been their physical environment, particularly the mountains. The particular location of the *Navah* or *Qol* is determined by environmental factors, i.e. the harsh mountainous nature of central Afghanistan. A *Navah* or *Qol* is usually inhabited by members of one *Qaum*, though this is sometimes extended to include several families or *Tols* from other *Tayefas* or *Qaums*. The site for a *Qala* is usually chosen for its proximity to three things: drinking water, arable land and a mountain, with the mountain offering possibilities for fortification and defense. A famous Hazaragi expression indicates the importance of mountains in Hazara

life: '*Aga qaum-o khish dari, pusht-o da koya*' (if you have relatives and family, you are as secure as a mountain). The Hazaras even consider the mountains as part of them: '*Koh-o mardomon moya*' (the mountains are our people).

Although *Qalas* are still built in the Hazarajat and some of the most beautiful and grandest have been built over the past ten years, towns are also developing at an unprecedented pace. Today, there are few new towns developing in Hazarajat, some of which are competing with famous cities established some thirty years ago. In 1982, during a week spent in Sang-e Masha, in central Jaghori, I was surprised by the level of economic development, population growth, and the extensive market. Between 1973 and 1978, a girls' secondary school going up to the ninth grade had been built, as had a boys' secondary school, and several elementary schools. Furthermore, there were many shops (fifty-odd), a *Wali* or mayor, a police force protecting the city, especially at night, a taxation system, price controls, an extensive transportation network including a daily mini-bus to Ghojor and Jaghori, two clean and large inns able to feed some forty regular customers every lunchtime and offer guest house facilities at night. The style of houses in Ghojor and Sang-e Masha were completely urban, and included flats for rent, all with bathrooms. The market was attended every morning by Hazaras of Malestan and surrounding areas, who would bring their produce for sale, and would return with their own purchases from the market. These Hazaras, however, still used horses and donkeys as their main means of transport. Doubtless, yet further developments have taken place over the past two decades. Perhaps the most significant development in Hazara society over the past years has been the provision of roads and transport, linking on the one hand Kabul and Mazar to the Hazarajat, and on the other the different areas of Hazarajat to one another. Despite all these developments in the recent past, the extent of whose influence is yet to be seen, I believe the *Qala* remains the principal core unit of Hazara society, rather than the village as suggested by Bacon (1951: 36; 1958: 20). In fact, at the time of my visit in 1982, I was told that in Behsud and Kajau the construction of *Qalas* was on the increase due to demand from people fleeing Kabul and other cities; it has become customary now to rent *Qalas* for a period of time.

Every *Qaryah* has a mosque or a *Takiyakhana*, sometimes built in the same building, acting as the religious and social centre of Hazara life. Some *Qaryahs* also have one or two shops supplying basic goods; laying perhaps the foundations for a future village market. Although

money is used as a means of exchange throughout much of the Hazarajat, banks have yet to be introduced; people keep their money in their houses. The structure of a *Qariyah*, *Aghil* or *Qol* is such that its inhabitants all know one another and are related.

Most Hazaras marry members of their own *Tols* or *Tayefas*. *Khishi* (engagement) and *Toi* (marriage/wedding) are rarely undertaken with outsiders. The most usual bonds are between first cousins, or between two close families of the same *Tol* or *Tayefa*. Marriage to Afghans, Uzbaks, Tajiks or Baluchis rarely occurs and is contrary to Hazara tradition. The only outsiders accepted by the Hazaras are Sayyeds, and even then only Sayyed men. Even Hazaras of the two different sects, Shi'a and Sunni, do not inter-marry; nor do Hazaras of different Shi'a sects: the 'Twelvers' and the 'Sixers.'<sup>9</sup> Thus, marriage rules are determined by kinship. So much so that in the event of the death of her husband, a Hazara widow is automatically married off to her brother-in-law, regardless of age or suitability.

It is thus possible to conclude that genealogical links form the basis of social relations, and by implication, social structure, among the Hazaras. While it is impossible to deny the reverse connection, it can only be regarded as secondary. It is this genealogical continuity that distinguishes the Hazaras not only from other ethnic groups of Afghanistan, but also has created among them clear divisions, with each clan qualifying for the metaphor of the Chinese Box in its own right.

## 2.4 Population

Any discussion of the population of the Hazaras must confront two major problems. First, the population of Afghanistan itself has not as yet been ascertained, in other words, no reliable and accurate population census has been carried out in Afghanistan. This is due to the lack of the existence of an effective central government able, on the one hand, to act independently of tribal pressures and influences, and on the other, to successfully implement national and long-term development plans and to provide money, training staff and equipment. Indeed, the debate continues among political scientists as to whether governments that have been in power in Afghanistan since 1929 should be referred to as 'national', that is, representing the interests of the whole nation, or as 'ethnic/tribal', since tribal interests, especially those of the Pashtuns, have exercised a major influence on politico-economic decisions and general development



plans of successive governments. This lack of an independent and effective central government has inevitably led to the lack of a reliable and accurate population census.

Given this, any discussion of the population of the various peoples of Afghanistan is bound to be at very best an approximation. Such estimates can be reliable only when an accurate national census of the population of Afghanistan has been successfully carried out. In the case of the population of the Hazaras a further complication exists. The Hazaras living in Afghanistan, apart from those in Kabul, are divided into three groups: those in the North, those in the West, and those in Hazarajat. The largest section of the Hazara population inhabits these three areas, although there are others spread throughout the rest of Afghanistan. After the failure of the Hazara rebellion of 1891–93, the structure of Hazara society was greatly weakened. As a result of carefully worked out plans, the Hazaras were forced off their original homelands and into towns and villages in the north and west of Afghanistan. At this same time, a great mass migration of Hazaras took place; many took refuge in Mashhad in Iran, and others went to Quetta in Pakistan (then India). This deliberate programme of depopulating Hazara homelands by the Pashtun controlled governments of Kabul, and the ensuing resettlement of Pashtuns in these areas, continued even until the 1970s. Indeed, the reason for the migration of the Hazaras to the north and west of Afghanistan was the northward movement of the Pashtuns into Hazara country.

This displacement of the Hazara peoples makes any accurate census of their population very difficult. Indeed, since 1890 large pockets of Hazaras have settled in areas where their existence is unknown even to most other Hazaras. The following are the names of many groups of Hazaras who emigrated to Quetta in Pakistan after the 1978 coup and have since been rediscovered and re-identified. (Of course, there are others who have either been absorbed into *Qaums* in northern and western Afghanistan, or who have completely disappeared, or who remain but are unidentified as Hazaras.) They are the Qalluq Hazaras of Khanabad, Ali Abad, and Takhar; Shaikh Ali Hazaras to the east of Khanabad; Gargag Hazaras to the north of Baghlan; Nikpai Hazaras between Khanabad and Qundoz; Koh Gadai Hazaras to the west of Nahrin; Quzi Hazaras to the south of Nahrin and east of Khan Abad; Tulai Hazaras to the south of Nahrin (most probably named after Tulai Khan, the son of Changiz Khan); Dala Pas Kindi to the west of Nahrin and east of Andarab; Joy Kand Hazaras in Khan Abad; Naiyman Hazaras to the north of Baghlan;

Kolo Hazaras in Herat near the historical monuments; Ghorriyan Hazaras in Herat; Badghis, Jawand, Darra-e Kashroo, Day, Dah Marda, Khoshak and Lazir Hazaras around Herat; Day Mirak Hazaras to the north and in Sholtoo, Qora Khowal, and Divanah Qishlaq valleys; Chal Hazaras in Ishkamish; Koh Ghinar Hazaras in Baghlan; Babolah Hazaras in Samangan; and the Qaghai, Qool Bars, Qara Batoor, Yangai Qala, Main Mana, Khamisi, Qalai Qisar, Bab Vali, and the Pul-e Khumri and Badakhshan Hazaras (Gharjistani, 1988: 275–80).

These Hazaras are different to those known to be living in the Hazarajat. Most of these have only recently been identified and re-introduced to their tribal *Qaums* in Quetta, many decades and several generations on. Many have changed their religion or nationality and identify themselves as Uzbek, for example in Badghis, or Tajik, for instance in Panjshir, in order to escape social discrimination or government pressure. Even if a population census were to be carried out, it is most likely that these Hazaras would be categorized as Uzbaks or Tajiks of northern or western Afghanistan, or else altogether ignored and simply not included in the census due to identification complications, a practice common among government employees. Most interestingly, it is often the case that, because of socio-political domination by Pashtuns, some Hazara families chose Pashto names for their children, in order to minimize the discrimination experienced by them. As is well known in Afghanistan, at the time of the issue of national identity cards, those in charge never ask for the correct 'ethnicity' or 'tribe' of the new-born baby, but automatically insert 'Afghan' as a matter of course. In Behsud, I was shown several birth certificates issued to Hazara babies at the time of Zaher Shah, identifying their 'nationality' as Tajik, Uzbek and even Afghan!

The name Afghan is perhaps the most controversial of the past 100 years in Afghanistan, because of its dual ethnic and political implications. The difficulties surrounding the use of this term are as yet unresolved. The reason for identifying Hazaras as Afghan on their national identity cards is that the term is used synonymously with Afghanistani, that is, citizen of Afghanistan. In other instances however, for example, in government reports presented to the UN, especially during the reign of Zaher Shah, the term Afghan was always used synonymously with Pashtun. This can also be seen in academic studies on the population breakdown of Afghanistan, for example in *Afghanistan*, written by Donald N. Wilber. If we compare

the population breakdown given in the 1956 and the 1962 editions, we will notice that the number of Afgan or Pashto speaking peoples is put at 4 million for 1956; in 1962 this figure has gone up to 5 million, an increase of one million people in only six years. Furthermore, a comparison of other peoples during that same period reveals either no change or a slight decrease in numbers (Wilber, 1956: 62; 1962: 279).

In light of the issues discussed, it seems only sensible not to attach too much credence to population figures given for Hazaras or any other peoples in Afghanistan until a thorough and reliable census has been carried out. However, if an estimate were to be conjectured, my own observations from the material at hand would suggest a figure of well over 4 million for the Hazaras.<sup>10</sup> One way of confirming this figure is by looking at the numbers of refugees who migrated to Iran following the 1978 coup, the majority of whom were Hazaras. According to a report published by the UNHCR and other aid agencies working in Iran, there are estimated to be around 2.2 to 2.7 million refugees in Iran, of which the majority are Hazara. Along with many more left inside Afghanistan the total number of Hazaras reaches a substantial level. Hazarajat itself is densely populated. According to Canfield:

Considering the harshness of the terrain the Hazarajat is densely populated. Every tract of arable soil is used. Each year in almost every valley a few more square yards are cleared for cultivation. Population pressure, despite the heavy migration, has remained intense. (1984: 329)

A further relevant point here is the dramatic increase in the population of the Hazaras living in Kabul. This has increased steadily since the coup so that the Hazaras have come to make up almost half the entire population of the city. This increase has had three main historical causes:

- (a) *Political factors*: the Pashtunization of Afghanistan mostly in the shape of government backed pressures exercised by Pashtun nomads on Hazaras, known as the 'depopulation' policy. This theory was confirmed by Charles Masson (James Lewis) in his study (1842: 217–18, 244) and more recently by Wilber (1962: 34, 35, 300).
- (b) *Economic factors*: themselves a result of the first factor. Politico-economic domination by Pashtun nomads brought about the gradual destruction of the agricultural economy of the Hazarajat,

forcing, in turn, the migration of its inhabitants into cities, such as Kabul. The most famous of these migrations took place during the 1970s, when famine and drought forced many Hazaras to seek refuge in Kabul and other cities, and eventually to settle there (Canfield, 1984: 329).

- (c) *War*: during the 1980s there were two wars going on in the Hazarajat simultaneously: a war against the government and Soviet forces, and a war among local resistance groups. These wars have caused migration outside of Afghanistan or to Kabul. In 1978, the population of Kabul was put at 800,000; in 1991 it was estimated at more than 3 million, an almost 300 per cent increase (AFGHANews, 1991, 7/4).

## 2.5 Geography

Until the 1880s, the Hazaras were completely autonomous and in full control of all areas in Hazarajat. The Pashtuns had not yet found their way into these areas and the central government in Kabul had not yet succeeded in bringing the Hazaras under its rule. Hazarajat, which lies mostly to the west and northwest of Kabul, included, before 1880, Ghazni, Qallat-e Ghalzayi, areas of Balkh, Andarab and the border regions of Herat. The north-eastern most boundary of Hazarajat lay at a Pass situated 20 kms south of Mazar-e Sharif, continued southwards along the river of Dar Gaz past the forests of Boyna Qara, and onwards to Aq Kaprak, Qarah Kashan and Dandan Shikan Passes, where it joined the Shorkhab and Siah Khak. From there it stretched eastwards towards Hajar and Lurak villages, passing the Ghorband river and joining the Doab; then south again towards the Qotandar Pass and the village of Zay Mooni, where it turned westwards towards Sia Khar, and onwards Jalriz, Surkh Sang, Jau Qol and Gardan-e Divar-e Nia villages. And finally, in a southeasterly direction past the village of Nanagai Shanba, Shorkh Sang, Sar-e Khavat, Bal Qara, Shamulto and Bonan Passes reaching the village of Allah-o Akbar. From there it stretched 26 kms west of Ghazni along the foot of the mountains running along the Ghazni-Qandahar road, to the proximity of Qandahar.

The southern boundary of the Hazarajat began at Maidan, passing Qalla-e Asiah and Moqor and continuing along the Nakhorb river to Shah-e Mashhad. Then westwards through Badan Mazar, Band-e Kotal-e Tahiry, Morghabi Charmistan, Mian Joy, Ay Kalan, Tan-e Morgh, Chakaloo, Lokorma, Band-e zarb, Bagram and Paya Koh,

passing the village of Ziarat-e Haji and continuing along the mountain ranges on the way down to Tagab Khor, through a Pass in the proximity of Zard Bed, where it turned northwards.

On the west the boundary began at Band Barmah, near Sia Lur village, stretching westwards past Tulok, Mah Gol, Polaristan, Sia Lak, Qalla, Tekman Koh, Shahinak, Janoor, Chil Chava villages up to Khair Khanak. From there, it stretched along the Morghab river to a point 20 kms short of Bala Morghab, then through Band-e Turkistan Pass and along to the village of Bookan.

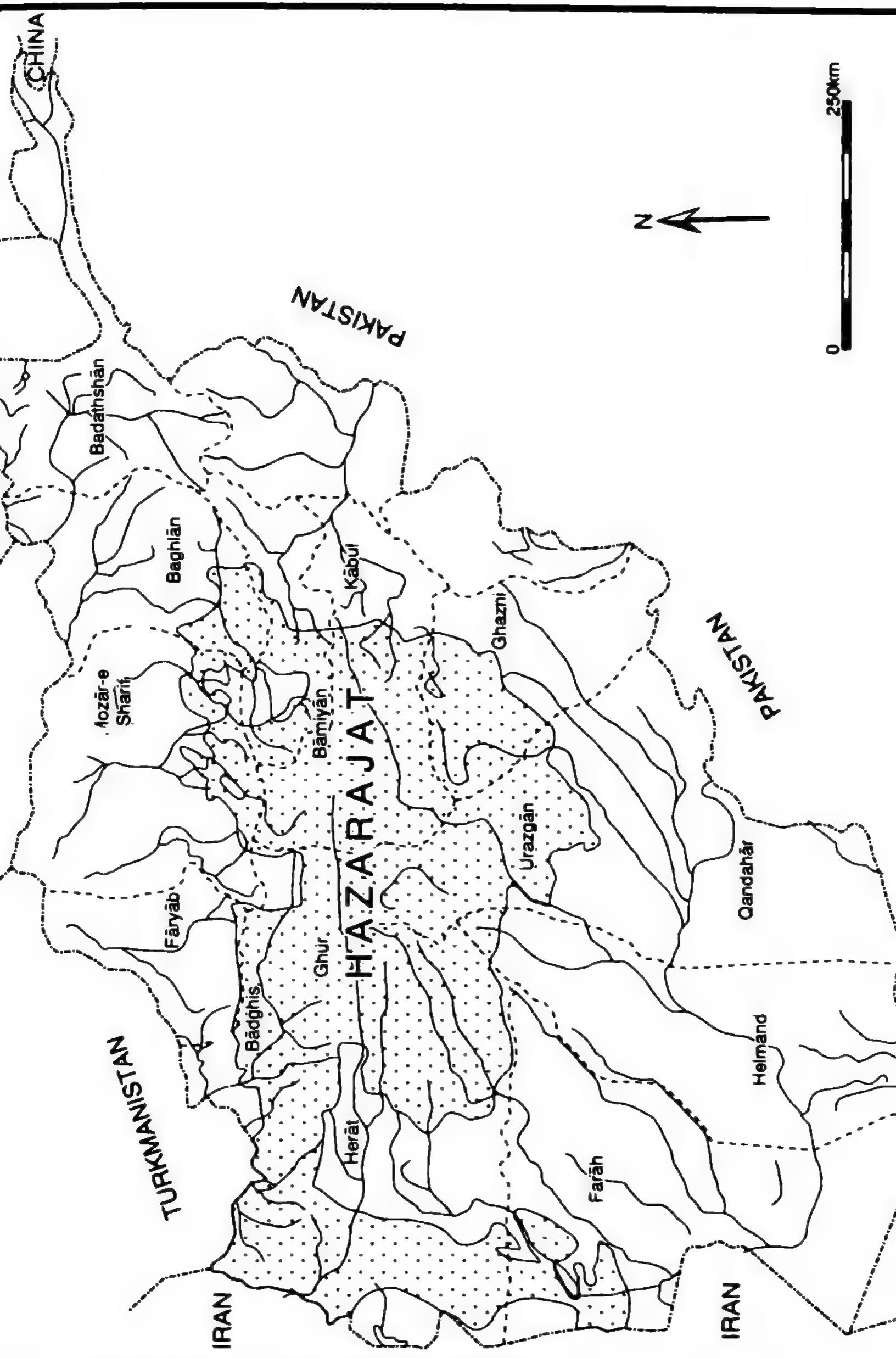
In the north, the Hazarajat included Qalla-e Wali, Char Shinia, Qalla-e Nau Dara, Tukul, Dahan Dara and Bol Chiragh, turning up northwesterly through Kawolian and Dor Day villages and up to a point 20 kms south of Sari Pol, and along to the neighbourhood of Khaja Qoroom, Bal Qorom and Tanga-e Koh (Temirkhanov, 1980: 37–9).

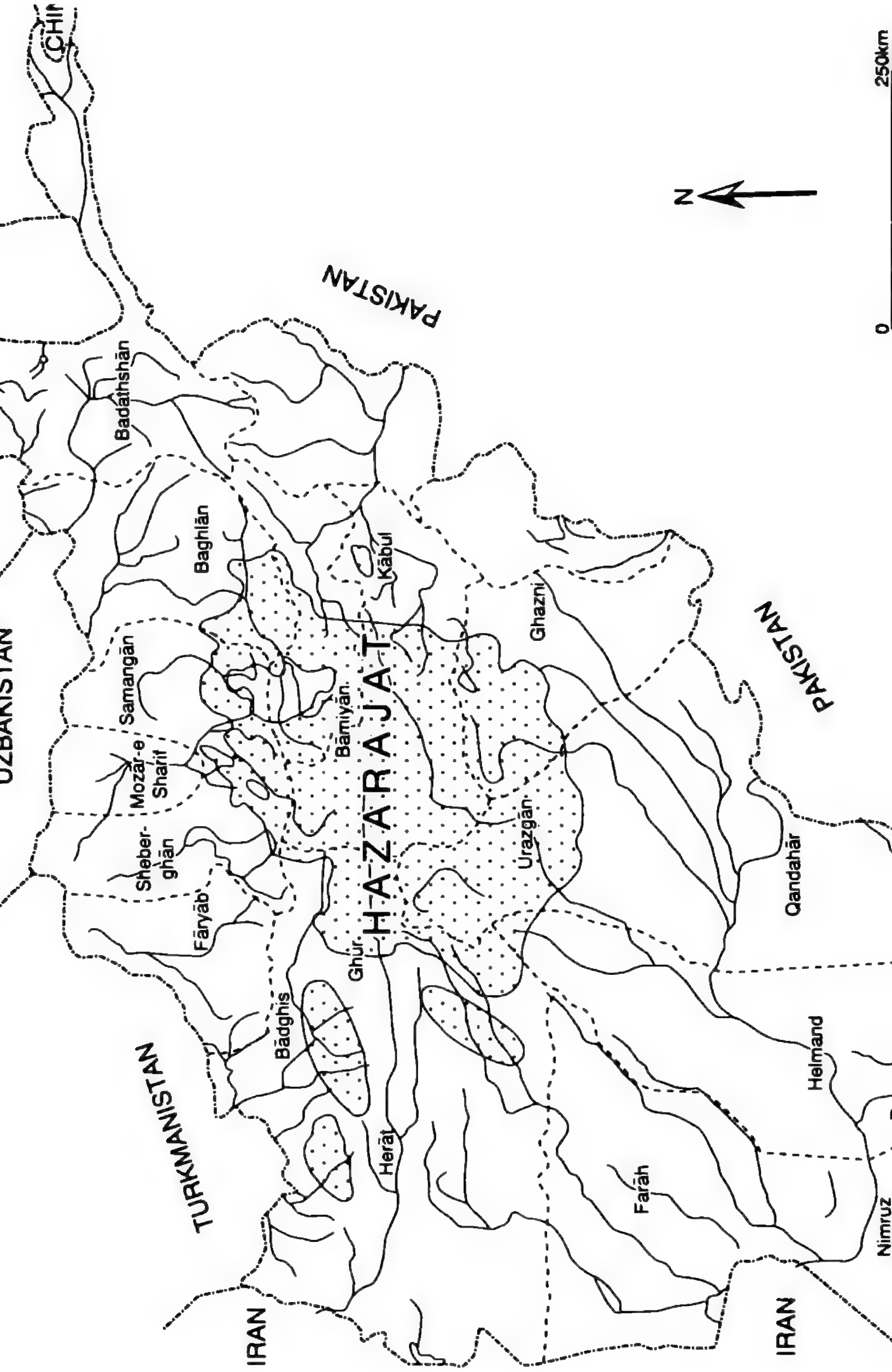
A new map of the geography of the Hazarajat was produced recently by Hazara refugees living in Quetta in Pakistan, and in Germany. The map, which is in Farsi, English and German, is, despite its weaknesses, at once a good representation of the feelings of Hazaras towards their lost country, and an expression of the continued importance of the question of tribal affiliations which has as yet not been successfully resolved in Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup> ('See Map 1').

Since the 1890s, the lands inhabited by the Hazara peoples has been repeatedly attacked and overrun by Pashtun nomads, who for the most part used this arable land as grazing ground for their livestock. This, of course, was the direct result of the implementation by successive Afghan-controlled governments of their 'depopulation' policy in the Hazarajat. The consequences of this policy were twofold: on the one hand, it led to a reduction in the size of Hazara 'country', and on the other hand, to the migration of Hazaras to cities and the consequent reduction in agricultural output of the Hazara communities. ('See Map 2'). Temirkhanov gives an accurate and revealing account of the extent of this reduction:

The area of Hazarajat has been increasingly reduced since the 19th century. According to our calculations based on various foreign sources, it has been reduced to 100–150,000 sq km. For example, during the 1920s, Maidan valley was inhabited both by Hazaras and Tajiks; since the 1970s, as a result of migration, no more Hazaras remain in this part. (1980: 39)







The exact size of the Hazarajat as it is today is not known. Today even tribal boundaries established before 1978 are no longer valid. Over the past sixty years most areas inhabited by the Hazaras have been taken over by Pashtun nomads who have either settled there or used the land for various purposes such as grazing grounds for their herds as mentioned above. With the downfall of the pro-Pashtun government of Kabul, and the emergence of the Resistance forces after 1978, the Pashtuns lost control over much Hazara and Uzbek lands, and were once again pushed back toward the frontier of Pakistan. One of the major factors contributing to the withdrawal of the Pashtuns from Hazara lands has been the rearming, for the first time since 1893, of the Hazaras; a factor with serious consequence for the future development of politics in Afghanistan.

A significant point to be made here is the flippancy of many Western writers and scholars when dealing with the tribal geography of Afghanistan. When drawing boundary lines, one third of Afghanistan is inevitably allocated to the Pashtuns, and the rest allocated to remaining peoples in a neat attractive pattern. The best known among such scholars is Louis Dupree (1980).<sup>12</sup> The map given on page 58 of his book appears, at first glance, to be a most accurate representation. A closer look, however, reveals a set of boundaries drawn almost as arbitrarily as those found on medieval maps of the world. Its inaccuracy is such that one wonders if Dupree was fully aware even of the difference between Tajik and Aimaq.

Today the Hazaras for the most part inhabit the central, mountainous part of Afghanistan. This mountainous terrain is well reflected in the special geographical terms found in Hazaragi. These terms, examples of which follow, are the best indication of the influence of this mountainous terrain on the social and cultural organization of the Hazara people:

*Tagau*: narrow plain between two mountains, with a river with wide banks, and small valleys, e.g. Tagau-e Barg and Tagau-e Kalanday.

*Jolgah*: a small lake made up of several rivers, e.g. Jolga-e Hilmand, Jolga-e Golkhar.

*Qol*: narrow valley, e.g., Dozd Qoal, Qoal-e Lurah.

*Qobi* or *Nau Chah*: opening created by floods, e.g. Qoabi-e Choknah, Qoabi-e Daulat Pai.

*Navah* or *Nau*: wide valley covering several small Qoals, e.g. Navah-e Mish, Navah-e Baghiran, Nau Jo, and Dara Nau.

*Toghai*; stretch of verdure on the bank of a river, e.g. Toghai-e Tabargho.

*Qash*: mountain spring surrounded by bushes (Qash also mean 'eyebrow' in Hazaragi).

*Olum*: ford, the shallow part of a river, where the people cross, e.g. Sar-e Olum and Perakh Olum.

*Kandaloo*: foot of a mountain or hill.

*Aska*: mountain plains bordered by rivers on three sides, e.g. Sar-e Aska, and Dahan-e Aska (Gharjistani, 1988: 161–2).

The mountainous terrain of Hazarajat has not only been an advantage from the point of view of self-defence and security, but, and contrary to the belief of many who consider the Hazarajat to be devoid of natural resources, has also provided it with great economic wealth. The most important mines of Afghanistan are located in Hazarajat. These are iron, copper, sulphur and coal. According to Temirkhanov, in the 19th century the Hazaras regularly extracted and used iron, copper, tin and sulphur from these mines, using very elementary tools (1980: 52–3). Today also, the largest sources of coal, the second largest export to Russia after gas, are both located in Hazarajat, in Dara-e Soof and Hajigak (Dienes, 1989: 78–9; Schroder, 1989: 109).

The major mountain range in Hazarajat, forming its backbone, is the Baba, stretching westwards towards Bamiyan for 200 kms where it joins the Safid Koh and Siah Koh and Tirband-e Turkistan. The mountains are populated by a variety of wild animals: leopards, wolves, wild bears, boars, deer, as well as many varieties of bird, the most famous of which, the *Kabk-e dari*, has been celebrated in Persian literature for centuries because of its beautiful song. The Hazarajat is also of significant geological importance due to its many unexplored natural and some man-made caves such as: Ligan in Varas, Kharak in Day Kundy and Pasroyah in Yakau Lang. Each of these caves has several legends and tales attached to it; for example, it is said that Ligan cave is where the people of Varas took refuge at the time of one of Abdur Rahman's massacres in that area. What is of particular interest in relation to these caves, lakes and other bodies of water such as *Qallas* and other historical sites, is the wealth of geographical and historical background revealed by them about the area, much of which is celebrated and kept alive in Hazaragi folktales, paintings and drawings.

Most of the larger rivers of Afghanistan spring from the mountains in Hazarajat, from where they run north, south or west, such as: Helmand, Harirud, Kabul, Morghab, Arghandab, and Khashrud:

The Helmand [river], over 700 miles long and the largest river of its latitude between the Tigris and Indus, rises near the source of the Kabul river at an altitude of about 10,000 feet; and flows southwest for some 200 miles through the gorges of Hazarajat. (Wilber, 1962: 29)

As well as rivers, the Hazarajat is rich in, and famous for, its natural lakes, providing a great attraction to foreign tourists in the past. Mostly situated in Bamiyan, these include: Band-e Panir, Band-e Barbar, Band-e Amir, Band-e Chalma and Band-e Haibat. The water in these lakes is so clear that from a distance they have an azure glow, allowing on close approach, for the lake bed to be easily seen. These lakes are not only an attraction to foreign visitors, but also hold great charm and history for the people of Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> It is said by the people, especially the Yakau Langi Hazaras of the area, that these *Bands* or dams were built by Imam Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet. Great tales are attached to these natural dams: it is said that in times past (presumably fourteen centuries ago), when Khorasan (Afghanistan) was ruled by a ruthless King, every spring when the snow on the mountains melted and the already full lakes of Bamiyan overflowed, this region was flooded, causing much death and destruction. Over the years the people of Bamiyan pleaded with the King to do something, but to no avail; not only did he not care to stop the flooding but actually punished those who complained. One day, after Ali came to power, he removed the King and set about building dams on every lake, one was made by his command (*Haibat*), and another of cheese (*Panir*) was made by local Hazara women, leading to the names of Band-e Haibat and Band-e Panir (Burnes, 1842: 176–7; Siddiqi, 1987: 67).

Although forests as such do not exist in the Hazarajat, the area has many varieties of plants and trees which are used by the local Hazaras in many different ways: as medicine, firewood and for other needs. In his trip to the Hazarajat in 1954, Wilfred Thesiger collected samples of local plants, including cereals and vegetables, totalling some 211 varieties, which he put on show at the British Museum of Natural History (Thesiger, 1955: 209).

Although the Hazarajat is one of the coldest areas of Afghanistan, with winters lasting six months and mountain tops covered with snow from October to May, it nevertheless has some of the greenest lands in the country providing excellent grazing ground. Unfortunately, it has been these very grazing grounds that have been the reason for the



## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

numerous invasions of this area by Afghan nomads, and the cause of many tragic and embarrassing events in the history of Afghanistan:

in the 1890s the nomads assisted the government to subdue the Hazara and as a reward they were allotted grazing areas in Hazarajat. (Ferdinand, 1963: 144, also see Temirkhanov, 1980: 152; United Nations Development Programme, 1979: 21).

# Chapter 3

## Culture and belief

*nem-hakim khatar-e jan, nem-mulla katar-e iman.*  
*A quack physician endangers the life and a semi-mulla the faith.*  
A Hazaragi proverb

‘Culture’ in its wide ethnographic sense is used here as:

that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Tylor, 1871: 1)

The culture of the Hazaras has been deeply influenced by their neighbours. Although physically resembling the Moghols, the culture of the Hazaras has been markedly influenced by Persian and Arab cultures. This influence is evident in their system of beliefs, language and arts.

### 3.1 Religion

The Hazaras are mostly Shi’a Muslims, and inhabit the heartlands of Afghanistan, surrounded by Sunni Muslims. According to Aristov (1895: 286), the Hazaras adopted Islam from the original inhabitants of the area, the Tajiks, who were apparently Shi’a. However, the accuracy of this assertion is open to question. First, Aristov fails to provide any documentation to support his theory. Second, the religion of Khorasan (the original name of Afghanistan) was Sunni Islam; centuries before the emergence of Shi’ism as the official religion of ancient Iran, which also included today’s Afghanistan, Sunnism was the dominant and official religion of the region. Furthermore, according to Ghobar, Islam was first introduced directly to the Hazarajat by the Arab Muslim commodore, Asad, in 724 AD (1980: 71).

A second theory suggests that the Hazaras adopted Shi'ism at the time of Shah Abbas Safavid (1589–1629). This theory was first proposed by Vambery in 1895, who maintained: 'Shah Abbas forced them [the Hazaras] to accept Shi'ism' (1864: 132). Some time later, apparently without any knowledge of Vambery's view, Schurmann was to propose a similar theory:

Shi'ism could only have been introduced into the Hazarajat from the west, from Persia, the only important Shi'ite nation in the Muslim world. Hazara Shi'ism, like that of Persia, is *Isna-Ashari* (Twelver). Given the extreme pro-Shi'ism of the migrant Berberis, one can conclude that there are no important theological differences between Persian and Hazara Shi'ism. Although Shi'ism of history is almost as old as Islam itself, it was not until the rise of the Safavids (16th century) that Shi'ism became the state religion and that the masses of Persia were completely Shi'ized. Before the 16th century, Shi'ism existed as a religious sect enjoying a more or less uneasy relationship with the dominant Sunnism. Thus one can assume that Shi'ism was introduced among the Hazaras some time after the rise of the Safavids, i.e., sometime during or after the 16th century. (1962: 120)

The theory of their conversion to Shi'ism at the time of Shah Abbas is confirmed by the Hazaras themselves. I have encountered this view among Hazaras in conversations with respected scholars, such as Mohammad Ismail Moballegh, and Mohammad Ali Modarris. This theory, however, is not without its weakness either. According to one of the most reliable historical texts of the Shah Abbas period, *History of Abbasid Amirs*, written by Iskandar Beg Turkman:

the Hazaras were already Shi'a at the time of Shah Abbas; two to three thousand Hazara soldiers, under the command of Din Mohammad Khan Uzbek, fought against Shah Abbas's army. (1916: 567–9)

A third theory maintains that the Hazaras adopted Shi'ism as soon as they converted to Islam. This theory was first proposed by Temirkhanov. According to him the Hazaras were idolaters; it was some thirty years after the death of Holaku Khan (1256–65), Changiz Khan's grandson, that his followers converted to Islam (1980: 31, 32). According to Rashiduddin Fazlullah, Ghazan Khan (1295–1304), Holaku's great grandson and the seventh *Ilkhani* ruler of Iran, was the

first of the *Ilkhanis* to convert to Islam in 1294 AD followed by 10,000 of his Moghul soldiers. He is said to have showed an inclination towards Shi'ism from the very beginning of his conversion to Islam. Ghazan Khan often undertook pilgrimages to the tomb of Imam Ali and his sons. He was always fond of respected Sayyeds and Shi'ias, providing them with regular stipend, mosques, money and wealth. After Ghazan Khan, Abu Sa'id (1317–35), continued his tradition (Rashiduddin, 1959: 984–5, 997; Mo'in, 1985, Vol. 6: 1232–35). Thus, according to this theory, Shi'ism was first promoted and encouraged in Afghanistan (then a part of the Ilkhan empire) by Ghazan Khan, his brother Uljaitu (1304–17), and the latter's son, Abu Sa'id.

It could be argued that the theories of Schurmann and Temirkhanov are both correct, i.e. it is possible that some Hazaras were converted to Shi'ism by Ghazan Khan and Abu Sa'id, a fact which need not contradict the theory holding Shah Abbas responsible for further encouraging Shi'ism among the Hazaras. Thus, it can be maintained that Shi'ism among the Hazaras began at the time of Ghazan Khan, but that it was not until the Safavid period, when Shi'ism became the official religion of Iran, that the process was completed. There had of course existed, previous to this time, Shi'as in today's Afghanistan and other Islamic countries in opposition to the ruling Sunnis (Orazgani, 1913: 69–72; Yazdani, 1989: 38–56). But it was the Safavids who were able to turn this opposition into an organised and official political force. The original Shi'as in Iran and Afghanistan were the descendants of Ali, known as *Sadat-e 'Alavi*. They were, for the most part, on the run and in a state of political exile, in order to escape the Omavids, and later the Abbasids (Habibi, 1988: 868–9; Yazdani, 1989: 39–44).

Thus the original followers of Shi'ism entered Afghanistan long before the Moghols; possibly at the time of Imam Reza (the eighth Shi'a Imam), who was called to Toos (today's Mashhad) by Harounur Rashid, the Abbasid Caliph, to take the throne, and whose followers must have joined him there (Habibi, 1988: 872). After the murder of Imam Reza by Haroun, the Shi'as were once again forced into exile; it was at this time that they may have travelled East to China.

In my opinion, the conversion of the Hazaras to Shi'ism did not take place at one particular period; it is not possible to maintain that the Hazaras converted to Shi'ism at one particular moment in history. Indeed such mechanical analyses of any historical and social phenomena are bound to be incorrect; every change in human society takes place over a period of time during which it follows its process of

development. The 'Shi'aization' of the Hazaras, like other social and historical phenomena, took place over a long period of time; entering a new phase even during the past few decades. Thus, it may be maintained that the Hazaras first turned to Shi'ism at the time of Ghazan Khan and that this continued throughout the reign of Abu Sa'id and later when it was further encouraged, and so flourished fully, at the time of Shah Abbas Safavid.

While most Hazaras are Shi'a, some, such as the *Shaikh Ali*, *Badghisi* and *Firozkohi* Hazaras, have remained Sunni. Shi'ism itself is divided into smaller sects: the *Dovazdah Imami* or *Isna-'Ashari* (Twelvers), the *Ismaili*, and the *Zaidi*.<sup>1</sup> The majority of Shi'as are *Dovazdah Imami*, while the Ismailis form a minority, living mainly in India and Pakistan. The Ismailis themselves are divided into smaller sects still. These divisions also exist among the Ismailis in Afghanistan, in particular among the Hazaras. According to Canfield:

The Ismailis are here referred to as sects, in the plural, because the Ismailis toward the southern end of their territories pay respect to a different saint than those of the northern end (those called in the ethnographic literature, 'Mountain Tajiks') and because in certain minor respects their beliefs are different, the southern type having renounced some years ago the veneration of Saints. (1973: 1)

The spread of Ismailis in Afghanistan is said to have begun in 940 AD, when it entered Afghanistan from Iran (Habibi, 1988:874). From 1052 AD. Ismailism was promoted openly in Balkh by the scholar and poet, Nassir Khosrou. Following a dream he had had in Jauzjan, Nassir Khosrow went on a pilgrimage to Mecca which lasted seven years. Upon returning, because of his devotion to Ismailism, he was given the status of *Hojjat* (Minister) by the Ismaili religious leadership at the time of the Fatimid Caliph *al Muntansir* (1036-94), and sent to Khorasan for the promotion of Ismailism. However, he was repudiated by the Sunni clergy as a Shi'a and was forced into exile by the Saljuqi rulers of the time (Taqizadah, 1928-88: 26-37).

What is of interest here is the political dimension of the question of religion. For, while in purely religious terms, Sunni and Shi'a have no basic differences, this has not been borne out in reality, where the existence of the two sects has led to bloody wars, the emergence of new political boundaries, and religiously determined social strata. Over the past 100-odd years in Afghanistan, the Hazaras have been victimized socially and deprived of their natural and human rights



because they are Shi'a. Until 1919, some Hazaras were still kept as slaves by the Pashtuns; although Shah Amanullah banned slavery in Afghanistan during his reign, the tradition carried on unofficially for many more years. The outstanding peculiarity of the situation of the Hazaras is the escalation of what should have been no more than a tribal conflict into an all-out national conflict under consecutive Pashtun regimes, reaching its height during the reign of Abdur Rahman (1880–1901). With the aid of Sunni clerics, Abdur Rahman declared the Hazaras 'infidels' and waged *Jihad* on them (Kakar, 1971: 213), their sin being that they were not willing to accept Imam Ali as the fourth Caliph to succeed Mohammad, but in fact regarded him as the prophet's legitimate successor. This, in short, is the essence of the differences between the two branches of Islam, Shi'a and Sunni.

Nor did the power of propaganda against, and the victimization of, the Hazaras remain restricted to the borders of Afghanistan. One of the most internationally respected and famous scholars, a founder of the Islamic Renaissance, Sayyed Jamaluddin Al Afghani (1901: 166), referred to the Shi'a Hazaras as *ghali*. *Ghali* is the verbal pronoun derived from *gholov* in Arabic, its plural being *qhallat*, meaning extremist; the Hazaras are called *ghali* or 'extremist' because they proclaimed Ali to be their God. Many years later Temirkhanov (1980: 34) was to repeat this mistake. Fortunately this was later corrected and put into its proper perspective by Canfield (1973) in his valuable scholarly and more accurate study of the Hazaras. The source of this misinformation about the Hazaras' Shi'a belief is given by Harlan, from whom, in my opinion, both Afghani and Temirkhanov must have derived their information:

In their adoration of Ali they honour and venerate him as the deity. They are ignorant of the Mahomedan [Muslim] catechism and profession of faith which in a few words comprise the religion of Mahomed: 'There is but one God and Mahomed is the Prophet of God.' Their answers recur to a single point of faith: 'I acknowledge Ali the God upon whom be peace and blessings.' The following are the answers of the Hazarrahs when questioned of his faith, compared with the orthodox: Question, "Who are you?" The orthodox would answer "A slave", as would also the Sheah. Question, "The slave of whom?" Orthodox: "Of God." Hazarrah: "Of Ali." Question: "What are you?" Orthodox: "A Moslem." Hazarrah: "A slave of Ali." Question: "What is your profession of faith?" Orthodox: "There

is no God but God and Mahomed is the Prophet of God.”  
Hazarrah: “There is no God but Ali.” (Harlan, 1939: 139–40)

Is this, however, true? The Hazaras have in no texts referred to Ali as God. No historical or Islamic texts and documents support or even suggest such a claim. Nor is there any mention of this in the many works on the subject by Islamic scholars, be they from smaller or bigger sects of Islam. The fact is that the sect of *Ali Allahi's* (or worshippers of Ali), which died out very early on, was a *Sufi* sect which enjoyed hardly any following in Afghanistan. According to Burnes:

in the 1830s one of the *Ali Allahi* leaders who at that time enjoyed some following in Iran and Turkey, tried and failed to organize support in Behsud; instead he instigated an all out religious war which resulted in the total dissolution of the *Ali-Allahi* sect. (1839, Vol. 3: 263–4)

The reason for Harlan's mistaken assertion that the Hazaras were worshippers of Ali must doubtless have been his source of information. Harlan was in Afghanistan during the 1830s, exactly at the time of the activities of the *Ali Allahis* in that country. In 1823, he became a representative of the *East India Company*, and in 1826 entered the service of Shah Shoja and travelled to Kabul as his spy. In the 1830s he served Dost Mohammad Khan. He left Afghanistan after the first war between Britain and Afghanistan and died in the USA in 1871.<sup>2</sup> Harlan acquired his information on the Hazaras and the Uzbaks from Pashtun *Amirs*, during his employment as adviser to the British colonial power which he served at the time. He evidently knew little of inter-tribal conflicts.

Temirkhanov too, whether as a result of being influenced by Harlan's view, or due to his own misunderstanding of the social structure and religious values of the Hazaras, makes a similarly mistaken observation:

At the moment, the Hazaras are not considered as hot-blooded (devoted) Shi'as. The Hazaras claim to be Shi'a, but do not build themselves mosques or even pray regularly. (Temirkhanov, 1980: 33)

He quotes this from Schurmann (1962: 154–5), suggesting perhaps that Temirkhanov himself never travelled to Hazarajat. The most accurate study to date is Canfield's (1973), who has both been to the area and is knowledgeable about Hazara religious beliefs.

The religious hierarchy of Hazara society is as follows. The Hazaras hold Sayyeds, who can trace their lineage back to Ali and the Prophet himself, in great respect, placing them almost always in positions of leadership (Al Afghani, 1901: 167, 170). During the 1970s certain very limited and random activities were carried out in Kabul by some Hazaras against the Sayyeds, who had turned to leftist political movements as a result of disillusionment with their socio-political situation. A pamphlet was also published called *Sayyedgiraye*, the author of which remained anonymous. A certain level of opposition to the Sayyeds was also expressed by Hazara mullas (clergy). However, with the events leading up to, and including the coup d'état of 1978, these differences were all but forgotten. Since 1995, the old differences have once again resurfaced, although it remains to be seen how they will be resolved.<sup>3</sup> Today, the Hazaras are led politically and religiously by Sayyed, Hazara, and Afghanistani Shi'a mullas, acting as leaders of the Shi'a community.

The mosque and *takiya khana* are the main Shi'a religious centres of assembly where a range of religious activities from legal and marital matters to religious ceremonies and meetings are held. Often both are situated in one building, sometimes in separate locations; in either case the mosque and the *takiya khana* are centres for decision-making on all matters. In villages these are usually located centrally, so as to be accessible to all. In many Hazara villages, these centres are also used as guest houses for travellers, given the absence of hotels or 'Bed and Breakfast' facilities, and the lack of proper roads necessitating overnight journeys on foot or by horse, on the other hand. According to local tradition, the village elder is responsible for looking after overnight guests, arranging food and other comforts for them. Whenever there is lack of room for guests, they are taken to a mosque or a *takiya khana*. I myself once received this hospitality in a village in Behsud in 1981.

As well as these two religious centres, the Hazaras worship in two other centres known as *ziyaratgah* and *nazargah*. *Ziyaratgahs* are the alleged sites of the tombs of respected religious figures or martyrs. *Ziyaratgahs* in Afghanistan, however, differ from those in Iran and other Muslim Middle Eastern countries; the reason being that, except for some of their descendants, no Imams ever travelled as far East as Afghanistan. All *ziyaratgahs* in Afghanistan therefore are sites of tombs of famous religious men or Sayyeds. *Nazargahs*, on the other hand, are believed by the people to have been visited by Imams or Imamzadas (Imam's descendants), the proof of which is seen in the peculiar and

mysterious signs believed to be evident at these sites. These signs vary, sometimes they are the hoofprints of a horse (such as at *Moradkhani* in Kabul known as the *Ziyaratgah-e Abulfazl*, son of Imam Ali), or the print of a hand with open fingers (such as *Ziyarat-e Sakhi* at the foot of the Asmaye mountain, in Kabul). Along the same mountain range can be seen a small corridor or passage formed as the result of an avalanche, believed by the people to have been caused by *Zulfegar*, the famous sword of Ali, and so is regarded as the *Ziyaratgah* of *Sang-e Zolfaqar*. In some parts, trees with irregular shapes are also revered; in other parts, no sign at all can be seen or considered necessary, such as the *Ziyaratgah* of *Khaja Parsay-e Wali* in Sorkh wa Parsa.

I was once told a story by some Hazaras about the way in which Hazaras turn a Sayyed into a *ziyaratgah*. Harlan also recounts a similar story in great detail:

All Mahomedans are addicted to the worship of saints. Their tombs are called Zearitgah [*ziyaratgah*], or place of visit for the purpose of adoration, and the presence of a holy corpse entombed in a country becomes an object of devotion to the inhabitants, who suppose the influence of sanctity ascribed to holy men secured to them the blessings they may seek at the graves of those descendant dispensers of fate! A Zearitgah was pointed out to me in Hazarrahjaut'h [Hazarajat] which the villagers had erected over the remains of a holy Syed famous for his miraculous powers. This Syed, confiding in their known reverence for the prophet's descendants and by no means dreaming of the terrible result, ventured among the ignorant and incongruous race to solicit the religious alms that superstition and credulity confer upon a vagrant priesthood. The villagers, in their excess of piety, improved the occasion to secure a permanent blessing in the form of a Zearitgah that would guarantee to themselves and their posterity the composition of their sins for all future time! From motives of profound veneration and the neutralization of Satanic influences, they killed their guest and buried the body in a conspicuous place, over which a Zearitgah was erected and the deed duly commemorated. To this holy edifice the conscientious sinner daily resorted to perform his devotions and solicit the rewards of piety. (1939: 151)

One of the least-known religious customs of the Shi'as, found in particular among the Hazaras, is *Manqabat Khani*, held weekly in



private homes or *Takiya Khanas*. *Manqabat Khanan* or the *Maddah* take turn, in order of ability, to recite poetry learnt by heart in veneration of God, the prophet, Ali and his sons. The verses are usually sung in accompaniment to a very pleasant tune. The occasion is attended by men only. This custom is peculiar to Afghanistan and is not seen in other Islamic countries. Every *Maddah* knows by heart many thousands of verses and different tunes. The verses, which are in Farsi and are taken from some of the best poetry (written in Farsi) by Shi'a Persian poets, are recited by men who are more often than not illiterate. Often these verses are about the Prophet and Imams, while others are about nature. This is usually done while holding a long cane or stick and walking among the people. The cane used by the *Maddah* belongs to the one of the elders of the community and is considered holy and so is kissed by the *Maddah* before and after his recitation.

According to Huda, these ceremonies began in Kabul about eighty years ago, observed mainly by the *Qizilbash* Shi'as; their original instigator was probably the Sufi poet, Sayyed *Bulbul* (Huda, 1986: 29–39).<sup>4</sup> This custom has since played a major role in preserving Farsi literature in Afghanistan, especially in the face of the Afghanization campaigns of successive governments. Thus, while serving as a means of cultural and political communication and opposition, the custom has also resulted in the emergence and preservation of some of the best Farsi poets and literary figures in Persian literature in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup>

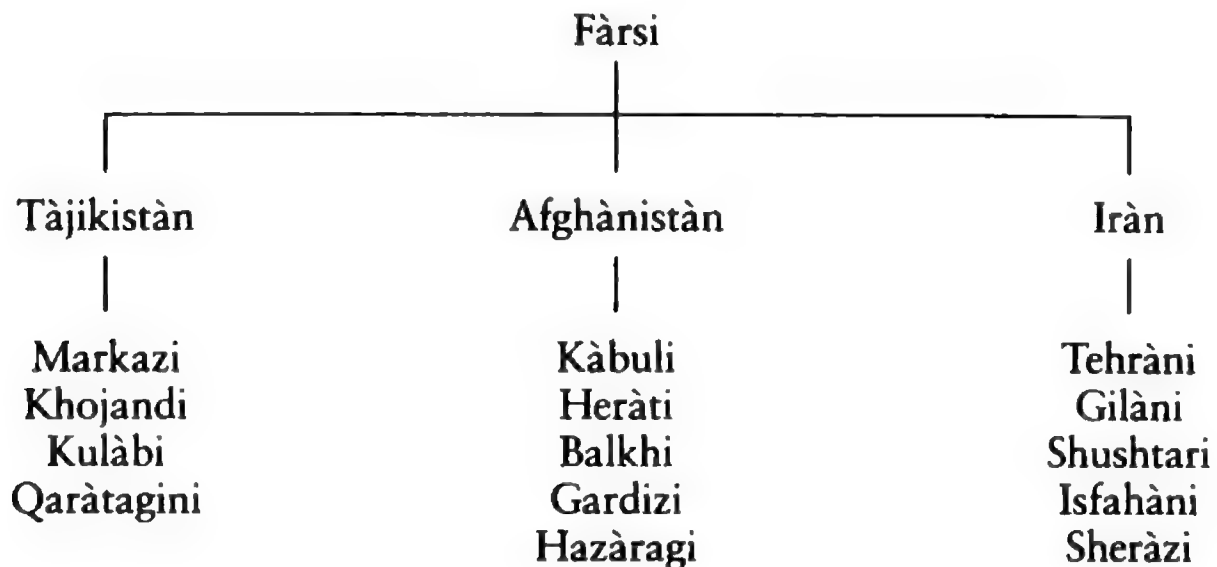
### 3.2 Language and art

Linguistic research on Hazaragi, the language and dialect of the Hazaras, has concentrated on two aspects. First, the relation between Hazaragi and the major languages that have influenced Hazaragi, such as Farsi, Mogholi and Turkish, and the extent of the influence of each of these on Hazaragi; and second, the particular characteristics and origin of Hazaragi itself (Ferdinand, 1959; Dulling, 1973; Weiers, 1975). What research has so far revealed is that Hazaragi is a mixed dialect of Farsi, Mogholi and Turkish, with its own oral but not written tradition. No books have ever been written in Hazaragi; Hazara intellectuals, scholars and writers have always written in Farsi or Arabic, and more recently in European languages, but never in Hazaragi.<sup>6</sup> From a linguistic point of view, dialect is a more accurate name for Hazaragi than language; both Dulling (1973) and Shahrستاني (1981) refer to dialect and accent (*lahjah*), respectively, rather than language.



## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

Upon this basis, one can maintain that Farsi is the only language of the area, covering Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan (Herawi, 1983: 73), and that within their political (as opposed to cultural) boundaries, each of these peoples has a different dialect. The diagram below illustrates this:



Among these, one factor distinguishes the dialect of the Hazaras in Afghanistan and the Gilanis in Iran from other dialects: the linguistic origins of many of the terms used by these two groups. Both dialects include many pure Farsi terms, rarely used in Tehran or Kabul, where these have been replaced by loan words from other languages. Hazaragi is composed of 80% Farsi, 10 per cent Mogholi and 10 per cent other languages. The dialect of the Hazaras differs greatly from that of other Farsi speakers also because of the influence of the Turks and Moghols.

As in all other dialects, there is an abundance of poetical and philosophical sayings in Hazaragi; the Hazaras are famous for their proverbs, a tradition on which most of their poetry and music is based. The following are a few examples:

*Dest-to poor basha, agar-che poor zamboor basha.*  
(Something is better than nothing).

*Gham nadari, buz bekhar.*  
(Don't go looking for trouble).

*Buz-e garg, az gala dur.*  
(Blacksheep of the family).

*Bach-e mardom az khod na musha*  
(Blood is thicker than water).

Hazaragi poetry is mainly folkloric; it is expressed lyrically and sung at weddings, feasts and other social gatherings including those for mourning. Hazaragi lyrics/songs fall into two categories: a) those without musical accompaniment, and b) those with music. Lyrics without music are of two different kinds: the *Daido* or *Bolbi* (yodeling), and *Makhta* (lament/elegy). The former

is sung with abrupt change from chest to head tones, and the reverse, e.g., from a natural tone to a falsetto tone and back. *Daido* or *Bolbi* is the most common song among the shepherds, and one occasionally hears them singing. (Poladi, 1989: 107)

*Daido* or *Bolbi* are often simple love songs sung at weddings and other celebrations by the people. The following is one example:

*Ma qurban-e beland gashto-vo shishto-e yar*  
*Fida-e zer-e lab khando-e yar*  
*Kodam harf-e ghalat az ma shonidi*  
*Fida-e be sabab ranjido-e yar*  
*Da sar-e zena, daido wa do aide he*  
*Ddilbar jan, daido he wa do aide he*  
*Dist-o paishee khena, daido he wa do aide he*  
*Sabar jan, daido he wa do aide he*

Translation:

I give my life in praise of your graceful body, my love  
I give my life in praise of your soft murmuring, my love  
What unworthy words have I spoken  
Though I worship even your undue dismay, my love  
Standing on the steps of the ladder, *daido wa do aide he*  
Her hands and feet are hennaed, *daido wa do aide he*  
*Dilbar jan, daido wa do aide he*

*Makhta* is a lament sung by women at times of mourning. It is believed that the *Makhta* emerged during the Hazara-Afghan war (1890–93):

Because of the war, tens of thousands of Hazara women lost their fathers, husbands, [brothers] or sons. In memory of the deceased, they began reciting eulogies. These eulogies not only reflect profound grief, they also show the qualities of the Hazara warriors. (Poladi, 1989: 106)

## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

*Makhtas* are generally named after one particular person (warrior, hero), and identified thereafter by that name. Among the most famous ones are *Faiz Mohammad (Faizo)*, *Gholam Hasan* and *Gol Muhammad*. Below is an excerpt from the *Gol Muhammad Makhta*:

*Shar-e Kabul ghau-gha shoda,  
Biraq-e sorkh bala shoda,  
Bach-e saqqau pacha shoda,*

*Arbon to Gol-Mamad-e ma  
Qeron to Gol-Mamad-e ma,*

*Yak jang sar-e rauza shoda,  
Gol Mamad khu kushta shoda,  
Sarak shi boreda shoda,*

*Arbon to Gol-Mamad-e ma  
Qeron to Gol-Mamad-e ma.<sup>7</sup>*

Translation:

The city of Kabul is in chaos,  
The red flag is raised,  
*Bachi-Saqqau* is king,

What a loss, Gol Mamad was killed,  
What a pity, Gol Mamad was killed,

There was a war at *Sar-e rauza*,  
Where Gol Mamad lost his life,  
Where he lost his head,

What a loss, Gol Mamad was killed,  
What a pity, Gol Mamad was killed.

Lyrics sung to music are of three different kinds: *dobaiti*, *chaharbait* and *ghazal*. *Dobaiti* is a couplet of two rhyming and rhythmic verses conveying a complete meaning in themselves, known also as *fard* (couplet). Below are a few examples:

*Alay ghal-ghal naku distma da asha  
yakak makhak bisto az shoi ma tasha*

*Did-e ma qol-bala qol-shew migarda  
ma kor shawaom dil-e aftew migarda*

*Mardak-e pir jay-e bab-e mo mosha  
javo bacha nur-e did-e mo mosha*

Translation:

My love, do not make any noise, I am in the middle of cooking  
Kiss me discretely, so that my husband may not see

The light of my life climbs up and down the valley  
I cannot bear to see him go under the heat of the mid-day sun.

The old man could be my grandfather  
The young man, the light of my life.

*Chaharbaiti* has four verses of matching rhyme and rhythm, of which the first, second and fourth verses must rhyme. In many *chaharbaitis* the first stanza of the second verse is repeated in the first stanza of the third verse. The following is an example of a *chaharbaiti*:

*Shab-e mataba, matabom nayamad*  
*Nishastom ta sahar khabom nayamad,*  
*Nishastom ta sahar sobh-e qiyamat*  
*Qiyamat amad-o yarom nayamad.*

*Biya binshin avala az vatan goi*  
*Do-vom az bulbul-e shirin sokhan goi,*  
*Sokhan haye ke dilbar ba to gofta*  
*Biya binshin yakayak to ba man goi.*

*Ma qurban-e qad-e nautak rasai to*  
*Sar-e khoda melum da pish-e pai to,*  
*So-nak ma mingari zari to namya*  
*Kudam kam khidmati kadom baray to.*

*Alif qad-o rokhit lal-as rafiq jan*  
*Baroy-e nazukit khal-as rafiq jan,*  
*A ga roz-e do-si barat nabinom*  
*Daqiqishi sareh sala rafiq jan.*

Translation:

It's a full moon tonight, but my moon has not come,  
I waited for him 'til dawn, without sleeping,  
I waited for him 'til dawn,  
The dawn has arrived, but my lover has not.

Come, sit by me and tell me first the news from home,  
Then tell me of my sweet-talking nightingale  
Everything my loved one has told you,  
Come and tell me it all word by word.

## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

I would give my life for your tall slender body,  
I put my head at your feet,  
You look at me, but with no compassion,  
But how have I wronged you.

My love, your body is slender, your face tender,  
My love, with a mole on your fine face,  
If I do not see you twice or thrice a day,  
Every passing moment feels like a year to me.

*Ghazal* is a love poem/song, usually taking the form of a conversation between two lovers, or an imaginary love story. *Ghazal* is longer than *chaharbaiti*, has rhyming and rhythmic verses, with each verse following the rhyme of the first two verses. The following is a *ghazal* of great beauty and subtlety by the famous Shahrestani poet, Abu Sahl:

*Dosh raftum pal-i-shi sob nabud nim shew bud  
Yak makhak istadum u mah qacharak dar khew bud  
Nagah bedar shodak pir khosur madar au  
Zad traqqas-i-bala khisht nabad, nim zew bud  
Sag au qauqola kad ta bekanad pay-i-ma-ra  
Koftamash ham chu misal-i kula paspartew bud  
Kula yak su kapi yak su ma beka dum dotaji  
Kar-i-dota-ra tu medani ki sada dar budew bud  
Abu Sahl ashiq ru-yi-tu shod ay mah-i-now  
U majal yad-i-tu ya ki khana dar Garmew bud  
Goftamash yar ki in a'shiq-i-derina-i-tu'st  
Goft; wakh kor shawam sar-ma tah-i-jamekhew bud.*

Translation:

Last night I went to her side, it was not morning then,  
but the middle of the night.  
One little kiss I took: The moon-browed one slept.  
At once the old mother-in-law awoke  
And with damned ill-luck made a racket like no sheep's dropping,  
but a good half brick.  
Her dog yapped ready to bite me,  
And I kicked it just as if it were thrown backwards like a light cap.  
My cap on one side and my boots on the other, I escaped,  
You know this making off, which always means running from it.  
Oh, my new moon! Abu Sahl fell in love with you,



## *Culture and belief*

Do you remember the time you lived in Garmew?

I said to her, 'My dearest, here is your former [long-time] lover!'

She said, 'Woe! my head was under the quilt.'<sup>8</sup>

Another form of Hazaragi poetry is the lullaby, made up of two verses taking the form of an imaginary conversation.

Lullabies are few in number in comparison with love songs. Hazara lullabies are simple and very brief, seldom consisting of more than a few lines. The mother takes the baby into her arms, lays with him on her lap or puts him into a cradle (Gaora) and, while rocking, sings a lullaby. (Poladi, 1989: 108)

The following is a Hazara lullaby:

*Lalay lalay ate-aya*  
*Lalay lalay ate-aya,*  
*Ate-bacha shikar rafta*  
*Da koh-e gholja zar rafta,*

*Lalay lalay babe-e aya*  
*Lalay lalay dede-aya,*  
*Pas-e darga khuro ya*  
*Tamb-e darga jaro ya,*

*Lalay lalay ate-e aya*  
*Lalay lalay ate-e aya,*  
*Nan malida tai tepshi ya*  
*Bisto, bokhor, shiri ya,*

*Lalay lalay bach-e aya*  
*Lalay lalay deda-e aya.*

Translation:

Lullaby baby, my son  
Lullaby baby, my son  
Your father has gone hunting  
He has gone to Gholjazar mountain,

Lullaby baby, my son  
Lullaby baby, my son  
There is a cock outside behind the door  
The broom is leaning against the door,

## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

Lullaby baby, my son  
Lullaby baby, my son  
Under the big wooden bowl is *nan malida*  
Take some and eat, it is sweet.

Lullaby baby, my son  
Lullaby baby, my son.

The artistic and poetic tradition and spirit of the Hazaras is too extensive for adequate coverage in just one chapter, requiring separate in-depth treatment. My concern here is to note that art and literature are present in every dimension of Hazara life, both individual and social. A good example is at weddings, where the ceremony is initiated and ended with poetry.<sup>9</sup>

Just as Farsi is the language of poetry, so this is reflected in Hazaragi, where the poems are mostly love poems, or poems expressing disillusionment, or more mundane or current matters. In 1981, when attending a wedding in Kajab or Kajaow in Behsud, I was told by one of the Hazaras present that most of the poems were composed by women, including those sung by men.

Types of musical instruments played by the Hazaras include; *dambura* (a plucked two-stringed instrument), *ghichak* (a two-stringed bowed instrument), Jew's harp, *chang*, which are rarely found now, *nay* (flute), and *dayerah* (tambourine). The *dambura* and *ghichak* are played by men, while the *dayerah* is played by women.

The development of Hazara music during the 1970s has meant that, since the coup d'état of 1978, Hazara music has been used for raising political consciousness among the Hazaras. One of the most famous Hazara singers who took part in this new development was Sarwar Sarkhosh, who was murdered in Jaghouri, in Afghanistan in the 1983.<sup>10</sup> He used the Hazaragi dialect to sing political songs, some of which I have been able to collect.

# Chapter 4

## Socio-economic relations and mode of production

*Azra rozi az sang paida mona.*

A Hazara find his bread from the stones.

A Hazaragi proverb

To review the economy of the Hazaras, it is necessary to consider the means and relations of production. In order to understand this it is necessary to analyse the social evolution of the Hazaras. Three major eras can be identified in the evolution of Hazara society: a) the Barbar era, b) the Khorasan era, c) the contemporary era, 1890–1978, the fall of the First Republic and the coming to power of the PDPA. The 1980s and 1990s will be examined separately in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively.

### 4.1 The Barbar era (300 BC–724 AD)

The areas currently known as the Hazarajat cover more or less the country known as Barbaristan in the pre-Islamic, and possibly pre-historic, ages. Barbaristan was a flourishing culture and economy based on trade, agriculture and animal husbandry. We know that in the first century of the Christian era Balkh was an international centre of commerce and a major crossroads in Asia, stretching from the west to the Persian and Roman empires, from the east to China, and from the south to India. Bamiyan valley, in turn, was a thoroughfare for rich caravans carrying valuable commercial goods to and from Balkh in all directions (Godard, 1993: 43). Its location, thus, made Bamiyan a rich city, enjoying a flourishing economy, which reached its peak at the time of the conversion of the Barbar kings to Buddhism around 200 BC. Ghobar writes of the flourishing economy of Bamiyan:

As the Romans were very rich and keen to buy Chinese silk textiles and Indian perfumes and spices, for which they exchanged gold, the markets of Afghanistan [that is, the area known today as Afghanistan] were flooded with their gold. (Ghobar, 1980: 50).

The use of gold for covering Bamiyan's famous Buddhas was reported by Chinese pilgrims in 632 AD (Godard, 1993: 60).

#### **4.2 The Khorasan era (724 AD–1890)**

This era, which lasted some twelve centuries, can be studied in two different phases. Phase one, the pre-Moghol era, which lasted between 724 and 1200 AD, marked the Islamization and Persianization of the inhabitants of Barbaristan. In 724 AD, a famous Arab Muslim officer, Asad, was appointed commander of the Muslim forces in Khorasan (today's Afghanistan). Asad, who launched an attack on Gharjistan, today's Hazarajat, eventually pacified the local ruler, Namrun, who himself converted to Islam (Ghobar, 1980: 71). And so Islam was introduced to Hazarajat for the first time. With the introduction of Islam to Hazarajat, Buddhism began its slow decline as the religion of the area; Buddhist monks either went to India, or were killed in their resistance to the new dominant force. Over the ensuing period, when Gharjistan came under the successive rules of the Ghaznavid and Ghurid dynasties, Islam gradually replaced Buddhism as the dominant religion of the area, with Muslim clerics and Sayyeds replacing Buddhist monks. Furthermore, with the major international trade routes now under the control of the Muslims, and the flourishing of shipping and sea trading routes under the non-Muslims, the economy of the region too began to decline. Gharjistan, and its centre, Bamiyan, no longer enjoyed their past commercial significance.

The language of the region also changed, with Farsi replacing Turkic and the other regional languages. Farsi was at that time, under the Ghaznavids, at its peak following the domination of Arabic as the lingua franca in the area as a result of the successful expansion of Islam. However, the pre-Islamic religions and existing language survived alongside Islam and Farsi for many centuries. The Islamization and Persianization of Gharjistan was a lengthy process, lasting some five centuries. It was during this period that the name Hazara appeared for the first time in Persian texts from the period, such as Nasir Khosrow's poems, and the inhabitants of Gharjistan came to be known as the 'Hazaras' (see Chapter 1).

The period also marks a transition during which the social structure and economy of the Hazaras came under the influence of the Ghaznavids and Ghurids (Yazdani, 1989: 138–9), who had at that time a highly sophisticated, well-established feudal social structure. Agriculture replaced trade as the focus of the region's economic activity, second in importance after animal husbandry, and followed, in third place, by commerce. The development of animal husbandry, more suitable to the geography of the region, into Gharjistan's main economic activity, probably dates back to this period.

Phase two, the post-Moghol era lasted between 1200 and 1890 AD. This period was one of the most unstable and destructive for the Hazaras. The onslaught by the Moghols, and later on by the Timurids, brought about the disintegration of Hazara society. Bamiyan, the centre of Hazarajat, was totally destroyed, never to recover its pre-Moghol splendour. Hazara society remained decentralized and backwards for many centuries to come.

During this second phase, covering nearly seven centuries, the social and economic structure of the Hazaras was predominantly feudal, with the particular characteristics of pre-capitalist societies. Slavery, though not as a dominant form of social relations, but as a means of production, also existed. Feudal Hazara landlords, known as *Mirs*, not only owned the means of production, land and animals, but also held power over the lives, property and labour of their serfs and peasants. In fact, Hazarajat was divided among omnipotent Hazara *Mirs*, with each *Mir* exercising total rule over his area. A small portion of land was periodically divided among the local population by the *Mir*. Land was sometimes given to certain servants and soldiers; this gift was known as *jagir* and was rewarded in return for military services (Harlan, 1939: 124). Land was also distributed among serfs, and the right to farm it could be passed on as part of the inheritance among the serfs (in other words, only the descendants of that particular serf or peasant were able to work the land of the *Mir*). Some land was also given to be used as grazing ground by all members of the tribe; naturally, keeping the best for the *Mir's* herds. The rest belonged to the *Mir* to be used by him for building houses, *Qalas*, etc.

Temirkhanov outlines the following distribution pattern of land among the Hazaras:

- (a) land owned by the *Mirs*;
- (b) land given as a reward by the *Mir* to his servants and soldiers, known as *jagir*. (There were also two types of *jagir*: one which



was passed on to descendants after the death of the *Mir*'s servants; and another which was handed back to the *Mir* after the servant's death);

- (c) land belonging to Hazara peasants;
- (d) land used by all members of the tribe as pasture and grazing ground known as 'common property';
- (e) land owned by small private landowners;
- (f) endowed land (1980: 65).

Such divisions of property did not necessarily limit the *Mir*'s control. The *Mir* had rights over all these lands, rights which gave him legal control and allowed him to treat his servants and peasants in any manner he desired. According to Harlan, all peasants and serfs in Hazarajat were regarded as the slaves and subjects of the *Mir*, with relations on this basis: 'that thou shalt want 'ere I want' (Harlan, 1939: 124).

The *Mirs* were not the only power which dominated and controlled the lives of the Hazaras. The clergy and religious leaders made sure that the pattern of exploitation and cruelty set by the *Mirs* was carried through to other levels. After the *Mirs* the clergy was the next most powerful section of Hazara society. The clergy fell into two categories: the *Sayyeds*, and the *Mullas*. The *Sayyeds* considered themselves to be of the *Arab* race and descendants of the Prophet. *Mullas* who were also *Sayyeds* exercised twice as much influence, while ordinary *Mullas*, usually themselves Hazaras, simply acted as religious and social leaders. In fact, it is perhaps more accurate to subdivide this section of Hazara society into three: *Sayyeds*, *Sayyed Mullas*, and Hazara *Mullas*; this section remains powerful to this day. These classifications still exist among non-Ismaili Hazaras. The Ismaili Hazaras have only one type of religious leader known as *Pir*.<sup>1</sup>

*Sayyeds* and *Mullas* did not just enjoy social influence, but also economic benefits and were often big landowners themselves. They received as *khoms* one-fifth of the income of the Hazaras, while they themselves paid no *khoms*.<sup>2</sup> This and other such taxes provided the clergy with considerable income. According to the *Sirajut Tawarikh*, all the land at Dana-e Ali and Yakaulang belonged to the *Sayyeds*, procured by them and the *Mullas* as *khoms* or as *waqfi* (endowed land). Endowed land was sometimes passed on to them by the *Mir*, or was taken by them directly from the people. With their economic and social, as well as religious power and influence, *Sayyeds* often reached high positions of political and social leadership. Such leaders became the most powerful *Mirs*, exercising influence in all spheres of life,

including religion, and enjoying great wealth. One such *Mir* in the 1890s was Mir Sayyed Ja'far, who became both the political and religious leader of the Shaikh Ali people and established himself as the leader-elder and *Mir* of the people (Faiz, 1331/1912, Vol. 3: 391–2). In some cases *Mullas* also attained positions of social and political leadership. One such *Mulla* was Qazi Mohammed Askar, son of Ali Riza, who, as well as being the religious leader, became head of the Fouladi tribe. Following him, two of his sons, Faizullah and Abdullah, became military commanders of the Haydar, while a third, Ali Naqi, became head of the Pashtun tribe (ibid.: 583, 739). These are examples from among the Shia and Sunni Hazaras. A similar pattern also existed among the Ismailis. Pir Firouzuddin, who inherited the position of *Pir* and leader from his father, Ali Gohar, and was leader, judge and owner of all the property of his followers, received one-tenth of their income each year.

Such exploitation inevitably brought about wretched economic conditions for the majority of Hazaras. Under the pressure of such poverty most were forced either into migrating or slavery, giving rise to the emergence of slave markets. Temirkhanov writes:

At times it appeared as though neighbouring leaders wanted servants and slaves, as well as taxes; for example, the Khan of Qunduz, Morad Beg, accepted, along with taxes, slaves and servant girls. (1980: 85)

This refers to occasions when, defeated by Uzbek *Begs*, Hazara *Mirs* would have to pay the former *maliyat* (taxes) or *baj* (tribute). Here again, it was the poor peasants who supplied this booty on behalf of their feudal lords; in some cases a member of one of the peasants' families was taken as a slave, or else a group of families together would buy a slave from the market to offer to the *Mir*, or simply ended up paying higher taxes.

War between Hazara *Mirs* on the one hand, and between them and Uzbek *Begs* and Afghan *Khans* on the other hand, created conditions under which offering oneself as a slave was often the only means of survival. In his diary, Wood paints a clear picture of the economic situation of the Hazaras during the last years of this period (1872: 126–7). Wood travelled from Kabul to Qandahar via Behsud in 1837. On his way he met many starving, barefoot Hazaras. From his conversations with them, he gathered that winter had come earlier than usual to Hazarajat that year, destroying all their crops, and leaving them unable to pay taxes to the *Mir* and the government. In

return, the *Mir* had confiscated all their property and animals. They had thus been forced to travel south in order to find work and food. It is therefore not surprising to find the Hazara slave trade flourishing under such circumstances. As Leech wrote in the mid-19th century: 'The Afghans believed the trading of Hazara slaves to be a legal act' (1845: 340); while Burslem observed: 'The majority of slaves in Afghanistan were from among Hazara tribes' (1846: 33-4).

Hazara economy during this second period had a feudal-slavery character, not so much as a stage in, or system of economic relations and production, but rather as the inevitable result of the overwhelming poverty of Hazara peasants and serfs, abused in the incessant struggles among feudal lords. The lack of a stable and powerful central government in Kabul had allowed various *Khans*, *Mirs* and *Begs* to establish themselves as minor kings in their respective fiefdoms, often refusing to pay their taxes to Kabul. Furthermore, because of the unstable and weak political structure of the government in Kabul, wars among landowners and feudal lords outside of Kabul were commonplace. In the case of the Hazarajat, such struggles for political and social control were even more frequent.

#### 4.3 Contemporary era (1890-1978)

This third era, which began with the defeat of the Hazaras throughout Hazarajat in their uprisings against Abdur Rahman (1890s), ended with the fall of the 'First Republic' in 1978. The socio-economic changes in Hazara society during this period, which covers three-quarters of this century, in comparison with the previous four centuries, were extremely rapid and extensive. Since this period is of major significance, I shall deal with it in greater detail. In my view, it is possible to subdivide this period into three phases, each of great significance in the socio-economic life of the Hazara people: phase one, lasting from 1893 to 1919; phase two from 1919 to 1928; and phase three from 1928 to 1978.

The most significant change brought about during phase one of this period was the total destruction of the feudal structure of Hazara society, including its system of *Mirs*, *Sayyeds* and *Mullas*, and its replacement by the pastoral nomadic structure of the Pashtun people and tribes. Hazara *Mirs* were replaced by Pashtun rulers, who represented the government of Kabul. This transfer of power from *Mirs* to Pashtun rulers brought few benefits to the lives of Hazara peasants; rather it resulted in worsening conditions.

While such a fundamental socio-political change in the well-established feudal structure could have brought about opportunities for the poor by which to improve their standard of living and social position, in the case of the Hazaras during this phase, the reverse occurred. They had barely escaped exploitation by Hazara *Mirs*, when they found themselves forced into slavery by Pashtun rulers. The available evidence clearly shows that the aftermath of the defeat of the 1893 uprisings in the Hazarajat not only did not signal improvements in the socio-economic conditions of the Hazaras, but considerably worsened them. In contrast to developments in societies elsewhere in the world, an effective method of agricultural production was replaced by a much more primitive means of production. In other words, the socio-economic relations of the Hazaras had been not overturned to make way for a more advanced and improved structure; on the contrary, a relatively more advanced former structure had been replaced by a primitive pastoral nomadism, not yet able to cultivate agricultural land (Ferdinand, 1962: 128). Arable land was instead transformed into seasonal grazing ground for nomadic shepherds and herders, reducing the harvest production of Hazara lands drastically. The Hazaras themselves were either put to slavery for the Pashtuns, were sent into exile outside Hazarajat, or else fled to Czarist Russia, Iran or British India.

With the coming to power of Shah Amanullah (1919–29) and the advent of the independence of Afghanistan, a new phase began in the social life of the Hazaras, and indeed of all the peoples of Afghanistan. Shah Amanullah condemned and abolished slavery throughout the country and treated the Hazaras as equal citizens along with other ethnic groups. While a small number of Hazaras had returned to Afghanistan from Iran during the reign of Amir Habibullah (1901–19), it was not until the reign of Shah Amanullah that the majority returned voluntarily, and had some of their confiscated lands returned to them (Gawecki, 1980: 167).

The Hazaras began restructuring their society and cultivating once again lands that had been used as grazing grounds by the nomads. By rebuilding their socio-economic structure and improving the means and relations of production, the Hazaras were able to compensate to some extent for the destruction wrought on their society in the 1880s. This phase of reconstruction was, however, very shortlived, although effective.

The downfall of Shah Amanullah and the following nine months of anarchy that reigned throughout Afghanistan brought about the

beginning of a third phase. Once again the Pashtun nomads, with the support of the government in Kabul, imposed their control over Hazara society and economy, dramatically slowing down its development. In fact the relationship between the nomads and central government was based on mutual need. The government in Kabul needed the support of the nomads to fend off any potential opposition:

The royal family, whose members look like solid Germans, has identified itself with the Pathans, as the foremost fighting element in the population. Pathan rifles and daggers saved the throne for them in the 1929 revolt over reforms. (Hunter, 1959: 343)

The nomads, in turn, needed the approval of the government in order to freely move their herds over pastures across Afghanistan, and also to carry on their trading without paying the necessary taxes. Often land used by the nomads to graze their herds was in fact cultivated land belonging to settled communities. In cases where the latter complained or spoke out against this practice, the authorities in Kabul inevitably took the side of the nomads. Ferdinand, who made a very thorough study of this situation during the 1960s, writes:

when the farmers in the summer area tried to deny the traditional grazing rights of the nomads, pointing to the damage done to their fields, the government upheld the rights of the nomads, and in this way helped to maintain the status quo. (1963: 144)

The other important factor which contributed greatly not only to the slow pace of the socio-economic development of the Hazarajat, but also to the transfer of much Hazara farmland to seasonal grazing ground for the nomads, was the unequal trading practices of the nomads in the Hazarajat.

Nomads buy wheat for delivery the next year, and pay for instance about 10 Afghani per *ser* (which is 7 Kilos). Next year the Hazara is unable to supply the wheat. He is then obliged to buy back the amount of wheat he owes the nomad, but now at the current price of about 25–30 Afghani per *ser*. If now the peasant is unable to pay this sum in cash it is converted once more to wheat, again on the advance payment basis of 10 Afghani per *ser*, which means that next year he has to deliver



2½ – 3 *ser* of wheat for every one *ser* contracted for this year. If unable to pay next year the calculation again continues as described, and the peasant sinks deeper into debt . . . [and as a result] . . . the nomads take over sheep, cows, and in the last resort land. (Ferdinand, 1963: 145)

This unfair trading, which was in line with the policies of Abdur Rahman's reign, continued more or less into the 1960s. While the subjugation of the Hazaras was not as brutal as it had previously been, in that the Hazaras were no longer enslaved, they were nevertheless restricted to the lowest social status and jobs. This segregation was so evident that it was even noticed by passing tourists and travellers (Byron, 1937: 277; Levi, 1972: 37, 226). During this phase, numerous groups of Hazaras flooded into the cities looking for day labour, while many went to Pakistan for seasonal employment. These Hazara peasants formed the very first sections of the urban working class in Afghanistan. Hazaras were widely seen in both the public and private sectors of the economy in Kabul. In the public sector, they worked at jobs on construction sites and factories. However, they were mostly to be found employed in the private sector, engaged in *Saqqawi*, portering, domestic work, *Karachiwani*, shopkeeping, selling used car spare parts or second-hand clothes, bread-making, sewing, carpentry, driving, and other manual labour. They were also engaged in seasonal work such as clearing snow or gathering wood during the winter months.

This situation continued until the coup d'état of 1978. The events and changes brought about since 1978 have not only changed life in the Hazarajat, but indeed life throughout Afghanistan. While it is difficult to know how profound and permanent these changes may be, it is certain, in the case of the Hazaras, that they will never again suffer total domination at the hands of the Pashtuns.

#### 4.4 Economy

Throughout the periods covered, from 724 AD to 1978 and up to the present, the mainstays of the Hazara economy have been agriculture, animal husbandry, industry and commerce. The Hazaras have always been a productive and industrious people, leading a settled and stable life. It was because of this stability that they had been able to create a well-established feudal society by the beginning of the 1800s. Division of labour, resulting from the evolution of tools and conditions of

labour, became more complex at this period, leading to the gradual separation of handicrafts from agriculture (Temirkhanov, 1980: 49). In order to analyse more clearly the mode of production of the Hazaras, I shall consider each of the three components of Hazara economy: agriculture, animal husbandry, and industry and commerce, separately.

### *Agriculture*

Agriculture had traditionally been one of the mainstays of Hazara economy. Thus, the traditional description of the Hazaras as 'semi-nomad' or 'semi-sedentary' is much exaggerated, and inaccurate; few semi-nomad Hazaras have ever been seen or are known of (though some examples can be found in north-western Afghanistan). Nomad is a much more accurate description of the majority of the border tribes of Afghanistan, generally of Pashtun ethnicity. In fact, in Afghanistan the term *Kuchi* (nomad) is often used synonymously with 'Afghan' or 'Pashtun' (Ferdinand, 1962: 130–5; 1963: 143–7; 1969: 127–8).

The crops grown most widely in Hazarajat are: wheat (*gandum*), barley (*jau*), corn (*javary*), peas (*mushung*), lentils (*addas*), broad beans (*baquli*), chick vetch (*kalol*), bitter vetch (*shakhal*), lucerne (*rishqa*), clover (*shabdar*) and other pulse crops (Thesiger, 1955: 315). In certain more tropical parts of Hazarajat, such as Tala-wo Barfak, rice is also cultivated. Wheat is the major crop, constituting up to 70 per cent of all agricultural produce. Fruits and vegetables are also cultivated in some parts of the Hazarajat. These are: carrots (*zardak*), potatoes (*kachalu*), turnips (*shalgham*), marrows (*kadu*), cucumbers (*badgrang*), tomatoes (*badinjan-e rumi*), onions (*piaz*), sweet melons (*kharbuza*) and water melons (*tarbuz*). Such crops are on the whole new to the Hazarajat and have mostly been introduced to the area during this century, and so tend to be restricted to certain areas. Also grown are safflower (*maswar*), rape (*sharsham*) and 'another plant resembling rape (*turbak* [= konjid]) from which they extract oil for their lamps (Ibid.: 315).<sup>3</sup>

There are traditionally three types of agricultural land in Hazarajat: *abi* (irrigated land), *lalmi* (rainfall land), and *sard* (cold spring-watered land). Land that is near a source of water, e.g. river (*darya*, *nahr*) or spring (*chishmah*), and can be irrigated by using traditional methods is called *abi*. Land that is dry and difficult to irrigate and depends for its moisture on rain or melted snow is called

*lalmi*. Finally, land that is well watered by perennial springs is called *sard* (Canfield, 1973: 23–5). Thus the Hazaras can sow both in the autumn and in the spring, while ploughing takes place in May and June. *Abi* land is found mostly along the plains north of the Baba and Hindu Kush mountains and on the banks of the Harirud, Hilmand and Arghandab rivers. There is a difference in the yield of *abi* as opposed to *lalmi* land; while the former is higher, the latter is of better quality:

In Nayak and villages of the Yakawlang province on the surface of 1 *jerib* of *abi* lands, 6 *ser*s of grain are sown and on *lalmi* only 1 *ser*. In favourable conditions the crops fluctuate from 40–60 *ser* per 1 *jerib*. *Lalmi* grain is more prized and commands a higher price in the bazaars. (Gawecki, 1980: 169)<sup>4</sup>

*Sard* land which

is plowed and seeded, then left alone without much attention, is similar to rainfall land in that it has only a short growing season, and may be spoiled by grazing animals, and wild fauna. (Canfield, 1973: 24)

Because of the scarcity of flat land, the Hazaras, have over the centuries, acquired excellent knowledge of their terrain and much experience in making the best use of their arable land. While the forests in Hazarajat could provide good sources of firewood, the Hazaras have devised other ways of preparing themselves for the hard, long winters by drying animal dung to use for firewood. They also practice soil fertilization:

The soil in river valleys is fertilized with sheep dung and with earth mixed with ash collected from inside the pens. (Gawecki, 1980: 169)

The system of irrigation used is at once indicative of the sophistication of Hazara farming and of the value attached to water. Water is transported by one of several means: the *juy* (ditch), or wooden pipes, used to transport water above ground from streams and rivers; *kariz*, or underground canals, drawn from sources of water in the mountains to the land. The division of water and of pipes, etc., is overseen by a *Mirab* (the person in charge of water division), who can gauge from the level of rain and snowfall, what quantities of water to expect. Water is also reserved by building dams along the rivers in order to form reservoirs from which water can be transported by *kariz*

(aqueduct). In the past, the *Mirab* was chosen by the *Mir*; today, however, he is chosen by the local people.

Throughout the Hazarajat very elementary agricultural tools are still used. In research carried out by Gawecki in the late 1970s, he mentions the use of some modern tools in Hazarajat, in particular in the north. In 1982, when the writer travelled through Dasht-e Navor and Dasht-e Khawat on the way to Behsud, there was also evidence of the use of modern agricultural technology such as water pumps. Despite such exceptions, the traditional tools and methods of earlier generations are still predominant. The land is ploughed using oxen and sometimes donkeys; the harvesting and threshing of crops is still carried out according to traditional methods, for example the grain is passed through large sieves to separate out the dirt and chaff.

Milling is carried out in traditional mills. Four kinds of mills are used for grinding the wheat:

- (a) water mills (*asia-ye abi*): in use throughout Hazarajat;
- (b) windmills (*asia-ye badi*): seen mostly on the plains of northern and northeastern Hazarajat, especially near Herat (Ferdinand, 1963: 71–89);
- (c) mills operated by animal power (horses, donkeys, etc.): used mostly in northern Hazarajat;
- (d) handmills (*asia-ye dasti*): hand operated rotary querns.

Owning a mill is, to this day, a sign of wealth. Any area with several mills is an area of high agricultural production and wealth. In the past, mills were the property of the *Mirs*; today they can either be owned by individuals, villages, or entire communities. Mills are also overseen by someone chosen and paid for by the people, as is the *Mirab*, and is known as the *Asiaban*. During the cold months of winter lasting up to six months, when the wind and water-mills cannot be used, animal powered mills or handmills are necessary. While the former are owned and used by groups, the latter are to be found in the homes of most Hazaras; a handmill consists of two pieces of round stone placed one on top of the other and may be used by anyone. Water and windmills, however, are more complicated and so are operated by more skilled individuals. According to Masson, in the first quarter of the 19th century, there were 6–7 watermills in Garimani inhabited by the Behsud clan; 20–30 around Kalautar near Bamiyan inhabited by Behsud and Shaikh Ali Hazaras, grinding approximately 7 bellows of wheat in 24 hours. In Doab, inhabited by Tatar and Habash Hazaras, there

existed 6 watermills grinding 4–6 bellows of wheat daily. Larger watermills were to be found mostly in Ghurband (today's Parwan province) and the Shaikh Ali clan locality (Masson, 1842, Vol. 2: 267, 438, 443).

Despite difficult and restrictive agricultural conditions, along with primitive tools and technology, the Hazaras have over the centuries succeeded in cultivating their land to achieve a high rate of production and maintained a high level of sophistication of agricultural production up to the first quarter of the last century.

### *Animal Husbandry*

Livestock were another mainstay of the Hazara economy before the 1890s. Animals were kept in large numbers by many Hazaras. Ferrier, for example, wrote that in the early part of the 19th century, the feudal chiefs of Day Zangi and Yakau Lang possessed more than 69,000 horses in their cavalry (1857: 455). After the events of the 1890s, not only was agriculture destroyed in the Hazarajat, but large herds of cattle and other livestock were also deliberately disbanded; they are rarely found in Hazarajat these days. With the immigration of Pashtun nomads into the Hazarajat, Hazara pastures were taken over by Afghan nomads, who were themselves animal herders.

Animals, such as horses, cows, sheep, donkeys, goats and mules, in some areas, are, however, still raised as a means of livelihood in Hazarajat, but in much smaller numbers and size of herds. Sheep in Hazarajat are characteristically fatty with very soft wool and skin. Sheep are shorn twice yearly; among these the red sheep wool is of particular value, being used for making the famous Hazara *Barak*, a thick woollen cloth used not only in Afghanistan but also exported to neighbouring countries such as Iran. Goat hair and sheep fleece are used also for making gloves, socks, scarves and Hazaragi cardigans and jackets. Wool from different animals is also used for weaving *qalins* (carpets), *jajims* (spreads), *gilims* (rugs), *namads* (felts), Hazaragi cloth, shawls and blankets.

Animals are also used for their milk and other dairy and food products, such as *chaka* (soured yoghurt), *qurut* (butter milk) and *maskah* (butter). There are two kinds of *roghan* (cooking oil), one is produced by melting animal fat and called *roghan-e dumbah*, and the other which is the most famous throughout Afghanistan and is produced by heated or broiled butter is called *roghan-e zard*.



The Hazarajat used to be, and to a certain extent still is, one of the major meat supplying areas of Afghanistan. Afghanistan has been, and remains in this respect, self-sufficient, other than in exceptional circumstances of drought or war. Traditionally, a certain number of animals, cows, goats and sheep are slaughtered in autumn and their meat dried and stored, ready to be eaten during winter (Thesiger, 1955: 316).

Leather, for which the Hazarajat was extremely well known as the major supplier of during the first and second periods discussed here, is still a major product though not nearly to the extent that it was in the past. It is generally exported either to Kabul or other commercial centres, or used by skilled professionals for making shoes, belts, bags and saddles or various domestic items such as *mashk* (leather sack). In 1982, during a week spent in Sang-e Masha in Jaghuri, I noticed a section in the bazaar dominated by leather tanners; I was told that individual Hazaras bring and sell their leather in the bazaar, from where, once sorted, the leather is wrapped, priced and sent to Kabul.

### *Industry and Commerce*

During the last century of the post-Moghul era (1200–1890), when Hazara society moved towards greater centralization, and each *Mir* struggled to subjugate more and more other *Mirs* to expand his domain of Hazara territory in order to establish a country of Hazarajat (*Hazaristan*),<sup>5</sup> development of levels and mode of production gathered even greater momentum. Division of labour became more complex and specialized; even the first corps of military forces were formed under various *Mirs* (Harlan, 1939: 143). Elementary Hazara technology improved steadily as the number of skilled masters increased. This development continued until the failure of the 1893 uprisings, which destroyed not only the by then sophisticated Hazara technology, but also Hazara social and agricultural organization (BM 1982: 80).

Industry had, however, taken third place after agriculture and animal husbandry in Hazarajat, prior to the 1890s. Temirkhanov gives two reasons for this. First, because of the mountainous and isolated territory of the Hazarajat which tends to exclude influences from major cities such as Kabul and Herat, along with poor transport and communications, the evolution and expansion of industrial production had been virtually non-existent and restricted only to the production of domestic requirements. Second, underdevelopment of industry in Hazarajat was due to its lack of contact with industrial

centres in the rest of the country. Consequently, different areas of the Hazarajat have each developed the production of certain industries and specialized master craftsmen (1980: 58).

It is my view that a third reason also existed, perhaps even more significant than the first two: the lack of political stability, and the endless feuding among Hazara *Mirs* on the one hand, and between them and various *Khans* of Qandahar or Kabul and Uzbek *Begs* on the other; in general, the absence of any long-term stability, caused by the absence of a powerful central government in Kabul. In the case of the Hazarajat, even during rare periods of peace among Hazara *Mirs*, there was little pause in the attacks by Kabul *Amirs* or Qandahar *Khans* and Uzbek *Begs*.

Despite the above factors, the Hazara industries which did develop were in keeping with the local needs of Hazara society. Up to the 1890s, industry in the Hazarajat was based on individual and family skills, usually handed down within the family from one generation to the next. The skills dominant in the Hazarajat were: weaving, tanning, shoe-making, sewing, ironmongery, silversmithing and carpentry. Due to lack of communication with the outside world, skilled masters had developed very high standards of work and specialized expertise.

As already mentioned one of the main and most famous products of the Hazarajat has been *Barak*, a type of thick woollen cloth. As Ferrier wrote more than 125 years ago:

Even the majority of feudal lords and rich men of Iran and Afghanistan had their official outfits made from the beautiful Barak woven by Hazara women. (1857: 192-3)

After the outcome of the unsuccessful uprisings of the 1890s, *Barak* manufacturing factories were removed from the Hazarajat and set up in Kabul, employing Hazara women captured and brought to Kabul as slaves by Abdur Rahman Khan's soldiers (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 1002). As well as the *Barak* made from lamb fleece and camel hair, Hazara women also wove fine textiles from goat hair, known for their beauty and good quality. This was woven either by hand or using very elementary tools, with the thicker wool left over used for weaving carpets (Temirkhanov, 1980: 51). Hazara *qalin*, *gelims*, *jajims* and *namads* were and remain famous worldwide. Also made by the Hazaras were wool slipper socks, gloves, scarves, hats and cardigans and a host of other necessary and decorative items for domestic use. Among these, Hazara hats and embroidered dresses are still prized for

their quality and rare beauty. All the colours used by Hazara women were natural vegetable dyes; further decorations were added by imaginative weaving, cutting and painting on fabric.

The Hazarajat is an area rich in natural resources, which have over the years been exploited through mining.<sup>6</sup> Even in the 19th century, the Hazara had perfected methods of extracting and using iron ore. According to Wood, reserves of copper and sulphur are also found in the Hazarajat (1872: 70). From iron ore extracted from these mines, Hazara blacksmiths were able to produce tools such as shovels, hammers, steel ploughs, and pickaxes, as well as other items needed for domestic use. According to Harlan, Hazara leaders were anxious not to reveal their skilful use of these resources to foreigners for fear of incursions into their land, such as the plan launched by the Khan of Kunduz, Morad Beg, to conquer Day Zangi in an effort to gain control over the Hazarajat mines (1939: 134). Temirkhanov writes:

An elementary and effective method of iron-smelting had developed in the Hazarajat. Ironmongers and rifle-makers used the extracted iron to make a variety of weapons, often of very fine quality, such as: knives, swords, daggers, spears, shields, and so on. After the defeat of the Hazaras in 1892, the production of the metal industry decreased considerably though the skill and know-how was never completely destroyed. For example, E. Reechku claims that at the beginning of WW1, many domestic appliances of very high quality were imported into the USSR from the Hazarajat . . . Hazara ironmongers did not only produce non-firearms, but also firearms such as guns and pistols. (1980: 52–3)

These craftsmen only produced goods to order from the local people and feudal lords, and not for commercial sale in markets. The absence of a central market or any permanent links with the markets in Kabul and Herat, retarded industrial development in the Hazarajat. Furthermore, there was no 'money'; industrial products were exchanged for goods,

coined money is unknown among them. Their fiscal arrangements are carried out by the interchange of other property rather than coinage. Their money of account is represented by sheep, slaves, piece goods in bales – one of the latter being the value of a slave – horses, etc. (Harlan, 1939: 133)

Craftsmen, then, produced only as wide a selection of products as satisfied their immediate needs, or for exchange for other goods.

Thus, there were no surplus supplies. Craftsmen were usually peasants with little land, who produced in order to supplement their agricultural produce by exchanging their products for daily necessities. Consequently, industry remained part of the agricultural economic system, and no surplus was produced, unlike in agriculture. With no surplus there was also no need for commercial and mercantile enterprise.

Products from abroad were introduced into Hazarajat by outsiders. These were mainly Kabuli, Indian and Iranian merchants, who were, in fact, obliged to exchange their goods for other goods rather than for currency. According to Temirkhanov, foreign merchants (especially from Turkestan) who went to Hazarajat, sometimes brought slaves with them to offer the Mirs in exchange for goods bought. These merchants often went to the Mirs and sought their help in carrying out their transactions. Among the products introduced were: gunpowder, *naswar* boxes, Austrian knives, and sugar, brought over from France via Mashhad. Other goods introduced by merchants passing through Hazarajat for other destinations were: cotton, needles, toilet articles and jewellery, sugar and salt. From Turkestan came rice, cotton wool and salt; from Herat and Kabul, metal goods; from India came firearms, cotton and synthetic fabrics, shovels, ploughs, and tobacco.

In order to obtain foreign goods, the Hazaras provided the traders with the following articles: sheep meat, cattle, horses, woolen fabrics like barak, clarified butter, lead, copper, rugs and felts. (Poladi, 1989: 342)

Trading among the Hazaras occurred at periodic fairs which they attended in order to trade for their requirements. These were usually held once a year. Regular trade during the rest of the year was carried out only by the Hazara tribes on the border areas or those neighbouring the Tajiks (Temirkhanov, 1980: 56–7).

Thus the role of the foreign traders, along with the lack of surplus supplies and consequently of surplus value, should be added to the list of three reasons outlined above as having contributed to the underdeveloped state of Hazara industry. Most products made by the Hazaras until toward the end of the 19th century, were gradually replaced by goods imported by Iranian and Indian traders during the last decades of that century, bringing about a decline in Hazara traditional crafts. Despite this, after the defeat of the 1890s, which virtually destroyed the socio-economic organisation of



Hazara society, certain crafts were redeveloped along with the reconstruction of the rest of Hazara society, which began in the second phase of the second period (1919–28). The mines of the Hazarajat remain valuable to Afghanistan today: virtually all the coal used in Afghanistan is extracted from the coal mines at Hajigak in southern Bamiyan and Darra-e Suf to the south of Mazar-e Sharif and north of the Hazarajat. In fact, Afghanistan is dependent on the Hazarajat for its coal production, the country's second largest national industry.

#### 4.5 Socio-economic changes

Having looked at the mode and relations of production of Hazara society and the factors which have influenced the economy during these different periods, it is now possible to outline the socio-economic changes that have taken place. The socio-economic conditions of the Hazaras have been influenced by both external and internal factors. The major external factor which has exerted an influence on Hazara society has been its domination by Pashtun nomads, enforced as a result of government policies carried out over many decades, between 1893 and 1978. This factor exercised particular influence and brought about many negative changes in Hazara life which will be discussed in greater detail in later sections.

The internal factors of change, acting from within Hazara society, may be divided into a) the social structure, b) mode and relations of production, and c) the physical environment of the Hazaras. Beginning with this last factor, it is an unalterable reality that the mountainous and rough environment of the Hazarajat, with little in the way of arable plains when compared with regions to the north or north-west of Afghanistan, has played a major role in the development of Hazara society. The physical isolation of the Hazarajat, while providing them with their best defensive weapon, has also been the cause of their very limited contact with the outside world. Indeed, the problem exists even within the Hazarajat, where areas located 3300 metres above sea level suffer particularly harsh winters lasting up to six months, during which time neighbouring villages are cut off from one another. The predominance of high mountains, such as the Baba, can mean isolation for the Hazarajat even during the spring and summer. Furthermore, the policies of successive governments vis-à-vis Hazarajat has meant a near total lack of even primary roads in the area to this day. A Hazara student from Orazagan, who had gone to



Kabul to finish his secondary education, told me in a meeting in Peshawar in 1989:

After finishing middle school, I went to Kabul in order to finish my secondary education. During the three years I spent in Kabul I was unable to visit Orazagan, because during the school holidays in winter (this is customary in Afghanistan) the roads were completely blocked, while I had school during the spring and summer. Most of the other Hazara students in Kabul also have the same problem and do not see their families for several years. In fact other travellers from Hazarajat also experienced such problems. It would usually take several weeks to travel the distance between most of Hazarajat and Kabul, and back again. Consequently, most travellers usually waited for the following year (spring and summer) before returning to their provinces. This situation has, over the years, clearly delayed the rate of economic growth, and general development of the Hazarajat, in comparison with other areas of Afghanistan.

The mode and relations of Hazara economic production have, since the post-Monghol era (1200–1890), been based on feudal values and patterns of exploitation, where a peasant was no more than a slave and was regarded as the property of the *Mirs*, to be used as a commodity in economic exchanges. The social structure of Hazara society has always been based on tribal values of clan and kinship, forged with little contact with the outside world.<sup>7</sup> These factors have, throughout many decades, forced many thousands of Hazaras into migrating or even emigrating from the Hazarajat in order to preserve their social structure. In 1893, with the further addition of an external factor, this migration, together with other socio-economic changes that were taking place, gathered momentum.

The classification of Hazara society before the 1890s, based on the system of land ownership outlined earlier in this section, can be summarized as follows:

- (a) feudal landlords (*Mirs*);
- (b) rich land-owning peasants (religious leaders);
- (c) middle class (servants, i.e., soldiers, serfs and relatives of the *Mir*);
- (d) small land-owning peasants;
- (e) landless peasants (slaves).<sup>8</sup>

After 1893 and the failure of the Hazara uprisings, this classification was totally transformed, leading to a new structure after 1919:

## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

- (a) rich peasants (*Arbabs* or community heads, etc.);
- (b) middle class (religious leaders and middle-class peasants);
- (c) small land-owning peasants (the majority of the Hazaras).

There were no longer large land-owning feudal lords. The leadership of Hazara society passed from the hands of *Mirs*, to *Arbabs* and *Maliks*, who enjoyed much less power, and were chosen by the central government. Religious leaders were downgraded to the level of small or medium land-owning peasants, while the confiscation of more and more Hazara lands by the Afghans reduced the majority of the Hazaras to small land-owning peasants, who also supplied surplus labour to the wealthier peasants of the two higher classes. After 1893, the majority of the rich and middle-class peasants were either exiled to the cities, or themselves chose to migrate to neighbouring countries, such as Russia, Iran and British India. The majority of poorer peasants were forced to look for work in cities, such as Kabul, where they remained and settled. Gregorian writes that

as a result of political upheavals or because of their own depressed position within Afghanistan, many Hazaras were forced to leave their traditional homeland in central Afghanistan. Some moved to Quetta in Baluchistan, others to Mashhad [in Iran] or other foreign cities, still others to Kabul. (1969: 35)

These changes in Hazara society continued until the 1950s, when a period of modernization, which was to last until the end of the 1970s, was introduced into Afghanistan, bringing with it changes that influenced all sections of society, including the Hazaras. Here again, the Hazaras lost more than they gained from these changes. A major change in the lives of the Hazaras, which was the direct result of the development of what is known in agricultural economy as the differentiation of the peasantry, gathered momentum during the 1970s. Mass migration of Hazaras to Kabul and other cities was one of the remarkable social phenomena of Afghanistan during the 1970s, to the extent that it was taken on board by political parties. The weekly journal, *Parcham*, wrote:

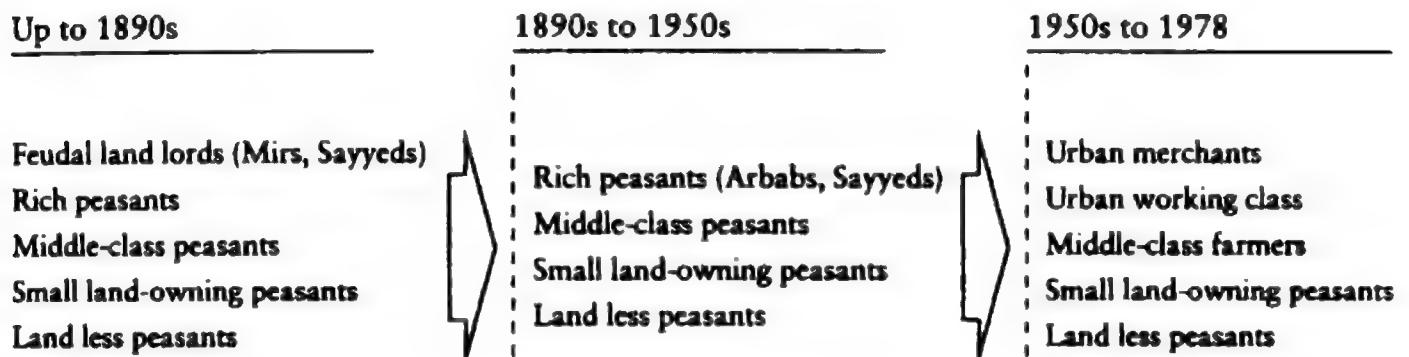
During recent years, many of our Hazara compatriots have been obliged, because of increase in population, shortage of arable land, harsh living conditions, oppression and injustice at the hands of local and government authorities, to leave their native lands and move in great numbers into the cities, where they

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survive only by undertaking hard and humiliating employment.  
(Nayel, 1985: 73)

Furthermore, between 1973 and 1978, when the borders of Iran were opened to workers from Afghanistan, hundreds of thousands of workers flooded into that country, where a booming economy desperately needed cheap labour, mostly in construction, and other unskilled labour. Afghanistan supplied the majority of these workers, of which over 60 per cent were Hazaras coming from all over Hazarajat. After 1978, this figure rose to 80 per cent.

The resulting changes and developments in Hazara peasant structure can be charted as follows:





## Chapter 5

# Socio-political change in Hazara society since the 1890s

*tang amad, da jang amad.*

One who is cornered will fight.

A Hazaragi proverb



In the past four chapters an attempt has been made to provide a general background to Hazara history and society. In this chapter I should like to explore in more detail the changes that have taken place in Hazara society since the 1890s, in part because of the significance of the events of those years, and in part because of the direct relevance of these events to contemporary Hazara society. The most significant years for Hazara history during this period were between 1890 and 1901. During this period, Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan, succeeded in fully applying Machiavellian principles of government to his rule, with a dedication and cunning that would have stunned Machiavelli himself. The events of these dark years have of course not only influenced the Hazara people, but the whole of the contemporary history of Afghanistan.

Abdur Rahman does not stand out in the history of Afghanistan merely for being a dictator 'king' or 'Amir', for all of Afghanistan's kings and Amirs have been dictators to some degree or another; rather, because he considered himself as a 'semi-god', with permission to exercise total power and control over the lives of his subjects.<sup>1</sup> It was not only the unfortunate Hazaras who were to arouse his violent and destructive anger, but also the Nouristanis, Uzbaks, Tajiks and even certain Afghans. As he himself recounts of his war against the Shinwari Afghans:

The fighting took place four times in four different places: called Hissarak Valley, Achin, Mangal, and Mango Khel. In every one



of these battles the rebels were defeated, leaving many killed and wounded upon the field. After this, the rest of the rebellious tribes became subject to my rule. The Mango Khel were either killed entirely or fled towards Tirah. I ordered that the heads of all those who were killed in battle should be piled up in the shape of two big towers, one in Jellalabad, the other at the residential palace of Shahmad [Shah Mohammad], who had encouraged them in their misbehaviour. (Sultan, 1980 Vol. 1: 238)

His ruthlessness and hatred of his enemies knew no bounds. General Gholam Heydar Orakzai, one of Abdur Rahman's military commanders, writes that after defeating the Nasiri, Taraki and Sulaiman Khil Afghans,

in the morning of the twenty fourth day of the month of Ramadan, I ordered the decapitation of all the enemy dead, and in order to rid the earth of their very existence . . . Four hundred and fifty heads were collected, the others having begun to rot and smell under the hot sun . . . These were then used, under the command of the general, to construct a minaret in Kotal Khan Tokhi. (Faiz, 1333, 1912 Vol. 3: 558)

And this during the month of Ramadan, one of the four months of the Islamic calendar during which fighting is forbidden.

The torture of criminals and so-called 'infidels' was commonplace, and very sophisticated. According to Ghobar:

In order to take confession from one soldier, he [Abdur Rahman] ordered the soldier to be hung from a tree for three days and nights, during which time he was put through all sorts of torture. One of the methods used was the following: the top half of his head was covered with a dough shaped bowl and boiling oil poured into it. This was done until the hot oil pierced through and the soldier lost consciousness; the only sign of life was seen as he blinked his blood and insect covered eyelids, until he eventually died. (Ghobar, 1980: 653-4)

As well as many ordinary prisons built during this period in Kabul and throughout the rest of Afghanistan, there were also *siahchals* (black wells) to be found.<sup>2</sup> In his book, Razawi gives a detailed description of these 'black wells' (1976:40). The day Abdur Rahman died, writes Ghobar,

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In the prisons of Kabul alone, 12,000 men and 8,000 women prisoners were found. In view of the total population of Afghanistan at the time, this constituted a large number. (1980: 656)

This was only in Kabul; similar situations also existed in other cities. Many of these prisoners were often innocent. Indeed, often a man would be found to be innocent by Abdur Rahman after he had been executed. Curzon gives several such examples;

On another occasion his [the Amir's] humour took a more gruesome turn. It was pointed out to him by one of his courtiers that he had ordered an innocent man to be hung. 'Innocent!' cried the Amir, 'Well, if he is not guilty this time he has done something else at another. Away with him.' Or '. . . as I rode to Kabul, I passed on the top of the Lataband Pass an iron cage swinging from a tall pole in which rattled the bleeding bones of a robber whom he had caught and shut up alive in this construction, as a warning to other disturbers of the peace of the king's highway.' (1923: 65)

Torture and overcrowded prisons were not the only characteristics of the twenty-one years of Abdur Rahman's reign (Ghobar, 1980: 651-7). What distinguished Abdur Rahman from other rulers of Afghanistan, was his belief that the people of Afghanistan were all treacherous and criminal (Curzon, 1923: 65, 92-3). As such, his only option in view of this perceived threat was to rule by fear, with the constant threat of massacre and annihilation. Here again, Curzon writes:

He confided to an Englishman at Kabul, that he had put to death 120,000 of his own people . . . This at a time when the entire population of Afghanistan was estimated at between 5 and 8 million. (1923: 66, 87)

This figure, of course, only includes those whose deaths were reported to Abdur Rahman; the actual total can be estimated to have been much higher. Thousands of men, women and children met their anonymous deaths on the escape routes to Russia, Iran and British India. Furthermore, the figure given by Curzon is for a period covering only thirteen years, until 1894, of Abdur Rahman's twenty-one years in power. In his biography Abdur Rahman claims that:

Those captured [Uzbaks] I had blown from the guns. The total

number punished in this way, during three years of the rebellion, amounted to 5000. Those killed by my army were about 10,000.<sup>3</sup>

With respect to another war against the Uzbaks, he claims:

the rebels losing 3000 dead in the field, . . . We also took 600 prisoners . . . I ordered a tower to be erected out of the heads of the rebels to strike fear into the hearts of those still alive. (Sultan, 1980, Vol. 1: 15, 21).

No accurate final figure of deaths during the reign of Abdur Rahman exists.

The fear, hatred and repression inspired by Abdur Rahman persists to this day in the souls and minds of the people of Afghanistan, in particular the Hazaras. More than all the other peoples of Afghanistan, the Hazaras were the subject of the wrath and hatred of Abdur Rahman. There were two main reasons for this. First, it was only the Hazaras who instigated and were able to carry out the largest uprising against Abdur Rahman, inflicting heavy losses and damages on the government in Kabul. According to Temirkhanov, the war against the Hazaras cost Abdur Rahman roughly one half of the country's budget and military force (1980: 143, 150). Thus, the Hazaras constituted a real major threat to his rule. Second, the Hazaras were Shi'a, and so considered as godless infidels by Abdur Rahman, a Sunni; war against them was a religious crusade and obligatory, and so was carried out with vigour and the help of Sunni Mullas. Only on two occasions did Abdur Rahman fight in the name of religion: once against the Hazaras because they were Shi'a, and another against the Nuristanis, whom he considered altogether pagan. For his crusade, it was the Afghans whom the Amir called upon, writing to them:

All those who have rebelled against me, the Amir of Islam, must be annihilated. Their heads shall be mine; you may have their fortunes and children. (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 809, 812).

The Hazaras were thus uniquely subject to discrimination on both religious and ethnic grounds in the war declared against them by Abdur Rahman, a war in which he did not refrain from committing any atrocity.

The descriptions given above serve not just to give a general picture of the conditions of the period, but also to provide a background for

understanding the Hazara uprisings and its causes, the study and analysis of which not only helps us to understand the events of that period, but also the nature of the changes in and development of Hazara society since. Of particular significance to the history of Hazara society are the three years between 1890 and 1893. It was during these years that the traditional established structure of Hazara society was completely destroyed, changing permanently the very nature of production, administration, leadership and other traditional institutions among the Hazara peoples; while at the same time the very seedlings of a new structure were emerging. This period saw the end of an era which had begun centuries ago, and the beginning of a period lasting through to the 1970s. In the following pages, I shall consider the background against which the Hazara uprisings of this period took place.

### **5.1 The causes of the Hazara uprisings**

Much has been written regarding the causes of the Hazara uprisings of 1893. Most of these writings have offered little in the way of a thorough and accurate analysis, except perhaps the study by Temirkhanov, although he makes certain rather seriously inaccurate assumptions and, as a result, draws unsatisfactory conclusions. His weakness seems to derive from the gap between his theory of society based on a 'class' analysis of society on the one hand, and the reality of a society not structured on the basis of those 'class' divisions (Temirkhanov, 1980: 117). Nevertheless, his study of the Hazara uprisings is the most interesting, detailed, and on the whole accurate account available on the subject. Temirkhanov classifies the uprisings which began before 1890 and lasted until the end of 1893, into three periods:

- 1 *Phase one*: covering the 1880s
- 2 *Phase two*: covering the first half of the 1890s, which can itself be divided into two periods:
  - (a) April 1892 to January 1893.
  - (b) January 1893 to August 1893.
- 3 *Phase three*: covering the late 1890s to the early 1900s (1980: 121).

The major causes of the uprisings have never been clearly and accurately classified. While some have blamed the conflict between the central government and local Hazara *Mirs* (Kakar, 1973: 8), others have focused on the repressive and unjust economic and social

pressures enforced on the people (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 733). Doubtless these constituted contributory factors. However, it is my contention that there were other, more serious, factors involved. The serious analysis and classification of these can greatly add to our understanding of the wider dynamics of society in Afghanistan, and by implication, our understanding of the unfolding of events during this period in Hazara history. Below, I shall offer a critical examination of the various points outlined by various authors, followed by others which I have identified. I shall then isolate and discuss the most significant factor, which, in my view, remains important and unresolved to this day.

The causes of the Hazara uprisings can be classified as follows.

### *Centralisation vs Decentralisation*

In order to achieve either economic development or national unity, it is necessary to have a powerful central government, capable of co-ordinating and leading different forces of production in order to successfully achieve and maintain economic growth and expansion on the one hand, and to implement domestic and foreign affairs of the state, on the other. The extent of the success of any nation in achieving development and economic growth and expansion, along with a united nationhood and foreign policy, depends on the degree of successful leadership and control exercised by the government at the centre. The stronger the centre, the further-reaching and more successful its development plans and political stability. As Kakar writes:

The Amir's policy was to break the power of the Hazaras, who as one ethnic group occupying a compact mountainous area, were considered a potential source of danger to Afghanistan. (1973: 8)

This factor of an unstable central seat of power has become the most commonly and widely accepted cause of the uprisings (Gregorian, 1969: 162; Canfield, 1973a: 99-3; Ghobar, 1980: 666-71). Indeed, it is a theory often accepted equally easily by those in power worldwide, as a means of justifying their treatment of ethnic minorities and political opposition. Examples can be seen in the case of the Chinese authorities and the Tibetan uprisings, or in India with respect to the Kashmiris, Sikhs and Assamese. It is thus hardly surprising that Kakar's view bears a close resemblance to the very words used by



Abdur Rahman himself when explaining his actions in Hazarajat (Sultan, 1980, Vol. 1: 276–84). Abdur Rahman claimed that the Hazaras threatened the security of the state and were interfering with state communications. In his article, Kakar confirms this, taking it even further than Abdur Rahman, and quotes Major J. Brown (1894) as stating:

they [the Hazaras] were not against the British. In fact, in view of their previous co-operation with the British, they believed that now the British would help them against the Amir. (Kakar, 1973: 7)

In a short article, Sarah Jones (1978: 3–5), also confirms the view held by Major Brown and Kakar. Even Temirkhanov considers the conflict between the tribes and the central government as the main reason for the uprisings (1980 :167).

Such a theory then would imply that it was Abdur Rahman's intention and policy subsequently to bring about national reconciliation, in order to be able to deter the threat of potential foreign invaders and insurgents, and furthermore that the Hazara *Mirs*, who perceived this policy and, indeed the whole notion of centralization of power in Kabul, as a threat to their local power, instigated the uprisings in defiance. In my opinion, this analysis of the Hazara uprisings is very theoretical and is not based on considerations of the real nature of society in Afghanistan at the time. I do not deny the existence of conflict within Afghanistan between the Hazara *Mirs*, Uzbek *Begs*, Afghan *Khans*, and the Amir of Kabul. However, in the case of the Hazara uprisings, I believe the perceived threat of this conflict to have been of secondary significance. For we know that Abdur Rahman, who was greatly supported by the British, received large amounts of financial help and weapons from his benefactors, leaving him little room for concern: 'the figure was, at first, 1.2 million kaldar annually, and later, 1.8 million kaldar' (Ghobar, 1980: 647–8).

### *Class Conflict*

This is a theory favoured by ex-Soviet and Afghanistani Marxist analysts. Akram Yari, himself a Jaghouri Hazara, killed by the Kabul regime after 1979, was one such analyst. He made a very interesting study of the development of the bourgeoisie in Afghanistan, on the basis of which he analysed the conflict between the Hazaras and

Abdur Rahman as basically one of class conflict, with each side defending its own interests (Yari, 1981). Such theories have for obvious reasons been much favoured by Soviet specialists on Afghanistan,

Excellent Marxist analyses of the policies of the Amir of Kabul, based on class conflict, have been carried out by Soviet scholars such as R. Reisnev and V. A. Romodin. (Temirkhanov, 1980: 117)

This theory, however, has certain very basic flaws. All other considerations apart, a class-based analysis of the Hazara uprisings can be accurate only when a clear definition of 'class' in Afghanistan at that time can be arrived at. Since no such definition exists or has even been attempted, the applicability of such a theory comes under serious question. It thus needs to be modified, and then only applied with great caution; for merely to superimpose theory on reality is to fail to seek a scholarly and accurate analysis of that reality.

### *Tribal Conflict*

The view held by most Afghanistani writers is that the principal reason behind the Hazara uprisings was long-term tribal conflict (Razawi, 1976: introduction; Farhang, 1992, Vol. 1: 399–404). According to this theory, Abdur Rahman's continuous wars against the different tribes and clans of Afghanistan can be explained in terms of long-lasting unresolved tribal conflicts, some of which had been on going for centuries. This conflict can also be seen in terms of an 'historical conflict', the roots of which can be traced back to 1747. It was at that time that the Afghans of Qandahar rapidly increased their power and expanded their domain. A careful examination of the socio-political evolution of Afghanistan society during the past two and half centuries, during which time the new country of 'Afghanistan' was born, reveals continuous struggles for power and political control among the different tribes of the region such as the Hazaras, Afghans or Pashtuns, Uzbaks, Baluchis, Nuristanis, Tajiks, Arabs, Qezilbash and others (Tapper, 1983: introduction). The one major factor which helped the Afghans to succeed over other tribes was their ability to achieve unity among themselves in their struggle against other peoples. This itself was brought about partly as the result of their links with the outside world; the Afghans had enjoyed power and learnt discipline in Nader Shah's army (1736–47) on the one hand, and had had close relations with the British, on the other.

However, this situation changed soon after they gained control. The Afghans had laid the foundations for the new country on the basis of their own tribal values and interests. The success they had gained during the first half century of rule in reconciling the different peoples of Afghanistan soon disintegrated, as did union among the different Afghan tribes. Consequently, Afghanistan found itself engaged in inter-tribal wars lasting through to the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> These inter-tribal wars not only destroyed the unity achieved earlier among the Afghan's own tribes, but also put enormous politico-economic pressure on the country as a whole. It was this inability on the part of the Afghans to rule the country and to unite themselves that encouraged and provoked other tribes to challenge Pashtun leadership and control. It is in this light, that the efforts of Mir Yazdan Baksh, Mir of Behsud, to reconcile the Hazara Mirs, and of Uzbek Begs such as Murad Ali Beg, in a similar direction, can be correctly understood.

Incessant fighting among Afghan Khans, coupled with the instability of the Kabul regime and the ever increasing taxes imposed on the people, were the principal factors which motivated other tribal groups to seek their own solution. Every new Amir who came to power in Kabul, however briefly, would impose an entirely new set of taxes, in order to prepare to defend his peoples against the deposed Amir, and to fight off rival tribes. Furthermore, those Hazara Mirs and Uzbek Begs who had enjoyed the friendship of the deposed Amir, would immediately be regarded as enemies and dealt with accordingly by the new Amir.

Thus, the rallying call that led to the struggle for independence of the Hazaras, Uzbaks and other peoples was, more than anything, a reaction to the instability of the central power in Kabul. In a situation of total uncertainty about the identity of the next Amir, uncertainty about the number of times and amount of tax to be paid each year, when friendship with and service to one Amir could mean death at the hands of the next, it is inevitable that those not in positions of power should have considered disengaging from this 'game' of warring Amirs.

In view of this situation, neither of the first two theories of centralization vs decentralization, and class conflict, offers acceptable or justifiable explanations of the causes of the Hazara uprisings. Both are equally unrealistic in, and alien to, the case of Afghanistan. It is my opinion, that quite contrary to the first view, it was conflict among the Afghan Amirs within the centre, that is Kabul, which initiated thoughts of independence in groups outside the centre.

With regard to the second analysis, can one realistically equate 'tribe' with 'class'? This is the clear implication of this analysis. For the struggles among the Afghan Amirs, or between the Amirs and leaders of other peoples, were clearly tribal, and in defence of tribal rather than class interests. It was because of tribal differences, for example, that Abdur Rahman waged war on those Hazaras who supported the previous Amir, Shir Ali. Abdur Rahman's hatred for Shir Ali can be seen throughout the former's biography, where he rejects the latter's policy of non-violence and considers him to have been the cause of the increasing influence of the *Mirs* and *Begs* (Sultan, 1980, Vol. 1: 250). In an interview with an Afghan nomad, a 70-year old man from the Ahmadzai clan, Klaus Ferdinand writes:

In the time of Shir Ali Khan (1863–80) these Hazara people were controlled by their own *Mirs*, and they taxed the people, and took also some salaries from the government. When Abdur Rahman Khan came from Bokhara (1880) and beat Shir Ali Khan, and took the Kabul kingdom, the Hazara *Mirs* were for Shir Ali, and therefore made a huge rebellion against Abdur Rahman Khan . . . at that time Abdur Rahman Khan spoke with the Mohmand and the Ahmadzai tribes and asked them to fight the Hazaras: 'Heads will be mine, and all property will be yours!' Then big fights started between the Hazaras and the Pashtuns (Afghans), and at last the Pashtuns were victorious and captured Behsud, Day Zangi, Day Kundi and Shahrستان, etc., and all the Hazaras from these areas were either killed or forced to leave. (1962: 128)

The above account clearly supports the theory of tribal conflicts as the major cause of the Hazara uprisings. It was because of these differences that Abdur Rahman exerted ever-increasing pressure on the Hazaras. While his oppression was at first political and financial, faced with the resistance of the Hazaras, he soon resorted to violence. It was this oppression and violence which incited the Hazaras to rise up against Abdur Rahman.

## 5.2 The Hazara uprisings (1888–93)

After coming to power in 1880 and taking the throne as the Amir of Kabul, Abdur Rahman enjoyed the support of Hazara *Mirs*, even in his struggle against his Afghan challengers. Indeed, the *Mirs* of Ghazni, Jaghouri, Sheikh Ali, Behsud, Malistan and Day Zangi all

proclaimed support for the new Amir (Temirkhanov, 1980: 116). They expected to have the same co-operative relationship with the new Amir as they had had with past Amirs: they would pay their taxes, and be allowed to carry on as before. However, Abdur Rahman had other plans. He intended to gain control over the previously independent areas of the Hazarajat (Orazgani, 1913: 7). At the same time he had little tolerance for the powerful Hazara *Mirs*. Thus, once he had defeated his Afghan challengers, he set about strengthening his control over the Hazarajat. His first step was to increase taxes. According to Ghobar, some sixteen different categories of taxes were levied (1980: 646–62). And this was only with respect to those Hazaras who supported the government and so paid the extra taxes willingly. However, soon after these increases, which themselves had caused great unrest and dissatisfaction, Abdur Rahman began incarcerating Hazara tribal and religious leaders. Abdur Rahman, whose aim was the weakening and thus the unconditional surrender of the Hazaras, began his assaults on the Sheikh Ali Hazaras. He chose them with the intention of exploiting the existing division between Shi'a and Sunni Sheikh Alis.

As mentioned before the Hazara uprisings of this period can be divided into three phases. Below I shall analyse phases one and two; I shall not include phase three as the uprisings of this period were on the whole on a much smaller scale and of little consequence.

#### *Phase one (1888–90)*

In 1881–82, Abdur Rahman took as hostage and later exiled to Mazar-e Sharif, the leader of the Sheikh Ali Hazaras in Daray-e Ghorband, Sayed Ja'far, and replaced him with an Afghan ruler (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 391–2). This unprovoked step understandably caused great unrest among the other Sheikh Ali leaders. In 1888, when Is'haq Khan, one of Abdur Rahman's cousins and the ruler of Mazar-e Sharif, rebelled against Abdur Rahman, member families of the Sheikh Ali tribe, such as Panj Qoal and Ali Jam, seized the opportunity and joined the rebellion. However, the rebellion was soon crushed and twenty-three of its leaders were arrested and put on trial (Temirkhanov, 1980: 124).

As previously mentioned, the Sheikh Ali Hazaras were divided into Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. It was by using this difference that Abdur Rahman incited the Sunni Hazaras to fight their Shi'a brethren, who had joined in the rebellion. By 1889–90, these differences had



heightened, resulting in conflicts between the two sects. Abdullah Khan, the Afghan ruler of the Sheikh Ali area, took advantage of the situation and fined both sects 100,000 rupees. Since neither side was able to pay such a heavy fine, when the government tax collectors arrived in January 1890, they were assaulted by government forces and forced to flee (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 683).

The Sheikh Ali rebellion gathered momentum when Abdur Rahman called their leaders to Kabul. Although the rebels, led by Mohammad Sarwar Khan and Sayyed Ja'far Khan, succeeded in defeating government forces, they were eventually defeated. Those who had fought against the government were executed en masse. Those who had surrendered were either imprisoned or sent into exile in northern and southern Afghanistan. In their place, Pashtun speaking nomads from Eastern Afghanistan were brought in to populate the area and were given land by the government (ibid.: 734, 953).

Although the Sheikh Ali rebellion was crushed and failed to develop into a wider movement, it nevertheless acted as an inspiration, for it was the first organized and well-led Hazara rebellion against Abdur Rahman. The demands, set out very clearly by the leadership and sent to Kabul, were the following:

decrease in taxes, the ending of violence, the liberation of their religious leaders and Mirs, and freedom to exercise and safeguard local traditions in local administration. (Temirkhanov, 1980: 122)

### *Phase two (1890–93)*

During the years 1880–91, Abdur Rahman succeeded in subjugating new areas of the Hazarajat, inhabited by over fifty different Hazara clans, such as: Orazgan, Sultan Ahmad, Loti, Haidar, Mir Qadam, Daya, Fuladi, Dankah, Haji, Qarliq, Muhammad Dabah, Nihal, Basi, Daulat Khan, Nik Muhammad, Aziz, Aska, Taghlog, Temoor, Qutina, Khiyal, Chopanak, Mir Qoli, Daroo, Barlas, Panjpa, Mir Adinah, Shadi, Tajik, Nor Big, Haji Khan, Khordak Zaida, Mliki, Moridi, Makanak, Gholam, Zavoli [Zabuli], Morad, Enayat Khan, Se Pai, and Khoshnoo (Temirkhanov, 1980: 116).

This area in fact constituted about half of the entire Hazarajat. As Orazgani writes:

The whole of the Hazarajat was inhabited by approximately 500,000 families, of which some 300,000 were under control of government rule. (1913: 73)

By 1892 Abdur Rahman had succeeded in subjugating virtually all of the Hazarajat, without facing any serious resistance. The Hazaras had accepted the taxes imposed on them, and had sent many of their men to be soldiers in the army.

However, this did not appear to be enough in the eyes of Abdur Rahman. He continued to view the Hazaras as a great threat and so set out to destroy completely and disband them as a force in Afghanistan. In order to do this, he first summoned to Kabul, and then imprisoned or exiled, Hazara *Mirs* and religious leaders. In their place, he dispatched Afghan governors and commanders accompanied by battalions of soldiers.

These new governors and commanders, among whom numbered many of Abdur Rahman's cousins, were free to do as they pleased in their new domains. The most infamous of these was Abdul Qodos, who according to Kakar 'was the first to enjoy the company of Hazara women' (1973: 5). According to one of Abdur Rahman's spies, who had been sent to the Hazarajat:

Afghan officers and commanders, headed by Abdul Qodos Khan, married daughters of Hazara leaders by force, each taking more than one wife, and generally spent their time drunk and enjoying themselves. (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 740, 745, 761)

Government soldiers were free to fine people as they pleased, or to capture and torture men under the pretext of disarming them. Orazgani gives numerous accounts of the different torture methods used; here I shall include but a few. Farhad Khan, one of Abdur Rahman's commanders on one occasion slew six people and then hanged their bodies from a tree; on another occasion he tied four people up and had them dragged by their horses until their flesh had begun falling off. On yet another occasion, two Hazaras were told to utter curses to Imam Ali (the fourth Muslim caliph and first Shi'a Imam); when they refused to do so they were thrown in front of a pack of hungry dogs to be devoured. A heated stone, red as fire, was thrown inside a man's shirt while his hands and legs were tied up; or a cat would be placed inside a man's trousers and kicked and beaten until the animal would become fierce and scratch and rip the man's legs and genitals (Orazgani, 1913: 79-80).

In order to protect themselves and to gain promotion, the Amir's commanders committed ever more and worse atrocities. They openly abused Hazara religious leaders and tortured or incarcerated Hazara *Mirs* and elders; even those Hazara leaders who supported the government were not spared, but sent to Kabul or imprisoned under false pretexts (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 733, 740). At the height of this policy, Abdul Qodos was ordered by Kabul to gather and send to Kabul all Sayyeds, Mullas and *Mirs* from the newly conquered areas. From among these, those known for their support of and loyalty to the Amir were employed in government services; those who were considered neutral were sent in to exile in other parts of Afghanistan, and those under suspicion were kept in Kabul in order to prevent any chances of an uprising (ibid.: 761).

In order to speed up the depopulation of the Hazarajat and its repopulation by Afghan nomads, Abdul Qodos Khan arrested and sent to Kabul the *Mirs* of the Day Kundi, Day Zangi and other clans, where they were tried for obstructing the law. Arable Hazara land was retaxed:

There were no laws and regulations regarding the amount and method of collection of taxes. Land tax would be collected in wheat [100 *khervar*, *khervar* = 100 *seer*, *seer* = 7.066 kg] from one family one day . . . The next day oil would be added on, then 100 sheep, then straw, followed by barley and so on. Government officials would take all this on a whim and by force as they pleased. (Orazgani, 1913: 81)

Those who refused to pay these taxes, such as members of the Day Chopan clan, were massacred by the hundred, including women and children. The rest of the population was totally disarmed, a process accompanied by random looting, destruction and assault on Hazara women (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 733).

Thousands of documents can be produced and hundreds of pages written, on the inhuman policies and activities of Abdur Rahman. The aim of giving these examples here is to provide a background to the period preceding the uprisings. It was the culmination of these conditions that provided the basis for the major uprising by the Hazaras. The actual trigger for the first rebellion was the assault by thirty-three Afghan soldiers on the wife of a Pahlawan Hazara. The soldiers, who had entered the house under the pretext of searching for arms, tied the man up and assaulted his wife in front of him. The families of both the man and his wife, deciding that death was one

hundred times better than such humiliation, killed the soldiers involved and attacked the local garrison, from whence they recovered their confiscated arms.

Thus the major Hazara uprising of April 1892 began in the occupied Hazarajat. Interestingly, the rebellion first began in parts of the Hazarajat where the Amir had enjoyed much support. Following the success of the above-mentioned attack on government forces, the Orazgani Hazaras also took arms and joined the uprising. Of all the Afghan forces in the area, only Mohammadullah Khan and his men were able to flee and defend themselves. As the uprising spread and neared Kabul, the rebels were joined by Kabuli Hazaras and even some dissatisfied government officials.

Although the uprising had begun as a popular rebellion by ordinary Hazaras, it was soon joined by prominent Hazara leaders, the first of whom was Mohammad Azim Beg, the Day Zangi Mir. Muhammad Azim Beg had been among the first *Mirs* to pledge allegiance to the Amir in Kabul in 1887 and so had been given the title of *Sardar* by Abdur Rahman. Indeed, according to Orazgani, it had been Muhammad Azim Beg who had planned Abdur Rahman's invasion of the originally unoccupied Hazara areas such as Oarazgan, Chorah and Arjistan (Orazgani, 1913: 76), and had consequently been made Viceroy of Hazarajat (Sultan, 1980, Vol. 1: 280). However, when the time came, Azim Beg joined ranks with his fellow Hazaras and set about organizing and giving direction to the uprising. He wrote to all Hazara *Mirs* and invited them all to a general meeting. It was at this meeting, which was to be known as the famous *Jirga-e Au Qoal*, that the Hazaras officially declared war on Abdur Rahman (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 800).

The major difference between this uprising and the Sheikh Ali uprising (1888–90) was that, while the latter had had specific aims such as the reduction of taxes, etc. the *Jirga-e Au Qoal* had as its declared intention, the overthrow of the Amir of Kabul. It was also for this reason that the uprising attracted a number of Maimana Uzbaks, along with government and Afghan officials (Temirkhanov, 1980: 1370). Thus, the rebellion spread throughout the Hazarajat, attracting Hazara officers and soldiers in the service of the Amir. Soon the rebels took over government food stores in the Hazarajat and closed off strategic roads into the region (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 800).

To begin with, Abdur Rahman did not view the matter as particularly serious and attempted to quash the rebellion by dispatching small forces to assist Abdul Qodos. Soon, however,

Abdul Qodos was defeated by Mir Azim Beg, as was General Shir Mohammad Khan, leader of Abdur Rahman's dispatched force. As well as victory over these forces, the Hazaras also gained access to a supply of arms and ammunitions.

It was at this point that Abdur Rahman became aware of the extent and seriousness of the uprising, and called upon Sunni religious leaders to conduct a 'religious crusade' against the 'godless' Shi'a Hazaras, promising those who took part in the crusade, Hazara land, wealth, women and children as reward. An enormous force was put together: some 30,000–40,000 government troops, 10,000 mounted government troops, and some 100,000 civilians (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 781–2, 809, 812; Sultan 1980, Vol. 1: 283). Also volunteering to join the crusade were Afghan nomads who had long pleaded with the Amir to fight the Hazaras (Sultan 1980, Vol. 1: 283). A state of emergency was declared in all cities. Even the British government offered the assistance of British military advisers to Abdur Rahman (Temirkhanov, 1980: 143).

Government and voluntary forces, along with the Afghan nomads, led by Abdul Qodos, General Gholam Haydar Khan and General Shir Mohammad Khan, surrounded all the areas where the rebellion was taking place. The first resistance came from the Day Zangi area where, despite a valiant effort, the Day Zangis were defeated and their leaders killed or captured. By June 1892, all out bloody war reigned throughout the Hazarajat.

Despite impressive successes, by August 1892, the major forces of rebellion had been defeated, and Azim Beg, the principal leader of the rebellion was captured and later executed in Kabul. Soon, Orazgan, the main centre of the fighting was captured and totally destroyed; thousands of Hazara men, women, and children were sold as slaves in the markets of Kabul and Qandahar, while numerous towers of human heads were made from the defeated rebels as a warning to others who might challenge the rule of the Amir.

Following this success, exorbitant taxes, and general oppression were once again the rule in Hazarajat. Added to this, the area became a centre for the slave trade, and for the first time, the government introduced special taxes for slave trading. Hazara slaves were being offered so cheaply, that a slave could be bought for 10 seers of wheat or barley (Faiz, 1333, 1912 Vol. 3: 863). Furthermore, the inability to pay exorbitant government fines and taxes soon forced many Hazaras to sell their own wives and children as slaves (*ibid.*: 855).

Bribery and looting of Hazara property by Afghan officials had



become regular and expected, and reached a point where the government in Kabul decided to take steps to curb these excesses. In certain instances, such as the case of Mir Ata Khan, who had received 163,260 rupees in bribes and had stolen its equivalent in animals and goods, the charged official was forced to pay the major portion of that into the state treasury. Mir Ata Khan was in turn allowed to keep 11,280 rupees, some land and eighteen male and eighteen female slaves (ibid.: 853-5). Massacres, slavery, heavy taxes and general destruction had reached such a level in the Hazarajat that the very existence of the Hazara peoples was endangered, a threat acknowledged even by one of the government's own high-ranking officials (ibid.: 855).

In January 1893, Abdur Rahman ordered all his Afghan commanders in the Hazarajat to collect and dispatch to Kabul, the names of all Hazara *Mirs*, *Sayyeds*, *Khans*, *Begs* and religious and non-religious leaders, along with the names of members of their families, regardless of whether they had taken part in the uprisings or not (ibid.: 862). This aroused once again the anger and hatred of the Hazaras towards the Afghans. Disobeying orders, Afghan officials instead either dispatched a small number of Hazaras to Kabul or remained satisfied with their torture and execution.

This upsurge in violence once again incited and ignited the flames of rebellion. Although the grounds for the uprising of 1893 had already been laid in the autumn of 1892, the events of early 1893 mobilized rebellion. The rebellion first began among the Day Zangi, Behsud and Day Kundi people and soon spread to most parts of the Hazarajat, finally reaching Kabul from where it spread to Daulat Yar, Bamiyan, Ghur, Ajaristan and Mazar-e Sharif.

The reasons for this second rebellion are clearly stated in a letter to Abdur Rahman by the leaders of the rebellion: the unjust treatment of the Hazaras by Afghan commanders and soldiers, exorbitant and numerous unwarranted taxes, assaults on Hazara women, the massacre of innocent Hazaras, the looting and pillaging of homes, enslavement of Hazara children, women and men, abuse of religious and social leaders, the accusation against Shi'a Hazaras of blasphemy, and the replacement of Shi'a Mullahs by their Sunni counterparts. The letter also clearly maintained that even those Hazaras who surrendered without resistance and others who fought as loyal soldiers on the side of the regime, such as many of the Behsud, Day Zangi, Day Kundi and Ghuri clans, were not spared this treatment either. The letter concluded that, in order to survive and free

themselves from slavery, the Hazara people were forced to take up armed rebellion and resistance against the government (ibid.: 891). The letter clearly demonstrates that despite all the massacres and oppression of their people in 1892, the Hazaras remained resistant to slavery and oppression.

The Amir of Kabul, taken by surprise at the response of the Hazaras, showed no initial reaction. Consequently, the rebel Hazaras were soon able to expand their territory and to gain ever-increasing control over the Hazarajat through successive and successful offensives on government garrisons and the recovery of needed arms. The emergency forces sent from Bamiyan were also soon defeated. Once again government officials were forced to abandon their posts in the Hazarajat and take refuge in Kabul. Soon, all strategic roads to Kabul fell under the control of the rebels, who dug trenches all along the route and prepared to launch their assault on Kabul. The rebellion had once again spread throughout Hazarajat.

In response, Abdur Rahman published a notice, entitled 'A Call to the Hazara People', with which he intended to drive a rift between the leaders of the rebellion. This he succeeded in achieving; soon disagreement arose over whether or not armed rebellion was the right course of action. Some leaders, such as Mohammad Reza Beg, believed that armed rebellion risked total annihilation of their tribe and so was dangerous. He subsequently changed sides and fought alongside government forces against the rebels (Temirkhanov, 1980: 161).

Using this weakness in the enemy camp, Abdur Rahman began his offensive in April 1893. After suffering heavy losses, government forces finally broke through the rebel blockade of roads and valleys and entered the Hazarajat. The Hazaras resisted fiercely, totally annihilating some government battalions, while others, such as the battalion from Herat, lost as much as 85 per cent of their men (ibid.: 163). Fresh government reinforcements, however, were soon brought in and the war and its atrocities heightened. According to Faiz Mohammad, hundreds of decapitated Hazara heads were sent to Bamiyan and other cities daily (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 898).

The war continued in this manner for months, during which time the Hazaras fought determinedly and fiercely, and succeeded in inflicting enormous damage on Abdur Rahman's forces. The end came in the summer of 1893, when Abdur Rahman recalled his forces from the Hazarajat and was forced to concede to the rebels' demands, and to grant Hazarajat special privileges (Temirkhanov, 1980: 166). At the

same time, faced with shortages of food and the prospect of famine, poverty, and the cost and losses of the war, the Hazaras also began considering negotiation. After a long meeting, representatives were dispatched to Kabul to negotiate with Abdur Rahman; members of several Afghan families were kept as hostages should Abdur Rahman stop negotiation and detain the representatives. After much discussion, and recognition on the part of the government of the rights of the Hazaras, the latter pledged allegiance to the Amir. Thus the final Hazara uprising was settled.

According to Temirkhanov, after the end of the war, the Hazaras divided into three groups:

- 1 *Mirs* who accepted the conditions of the Amir of Kabul, numbering some 10,000 families.
- 2 Hazaras who had no faith in the Amir's promises and did not trust him, but who were not strong enough to resist. These numbered some 15,000 families, and they chose to migrate to neighbouring countries, such as Iran and British India (Pakistan today).
- 3 Hazaras who neither trusted the Amir nor wanted to leave and so carried on their resistance to the Amir (ibid.: 167).

As a result of the stand taken by this third group, fighting continued until November 1893. The outcome, however, had long ago become clear. Finally, as those rebels who had continued their resistance laid down their arms at the end of 1893, the uprising came to a conclusive end.

### 5.3 Reasons for the Defeat of the Uprisings

It is possible to divide the reasons for the defeat of the Hazara uprisings into two sets of factors: internal and external.

#### *Internal factors*

The principal internal reason for the defeat of the uprisings were the political divisions among the Hazaras themselves, which prevented them from uniting. The political structure of Hazara society was such (and remains so) that it did not allow them to unitedly choose one political leader, and so achieve a co-ordinated stand, either in military or political matters. Sections of the Hazarajat did have some links with one another through their *Mirs*, but these were disorganized and fragile; while divisions and disagreement among them were deep and

powerful (Temirkhanov, 1980:169). Consequently, each *Mir* took an individual stand vis-à-vis Kabul, based on his local interests. It was by focusing on, and manipulating, this lack of unity that Abdur Rahman was able to turn the divisions among Hazara *Mirs* to his advantage.

The geography of the Hazarajat was a second contributory factor. While the mountainous terrain of the Hazarajat protected the Hazaras, it also proved beneficial to the government. Precisely because of the nature of the terrain, Hazara rebel groups generally fought in isolation, and without military organization and back up. This meant that they were mostly on the defensive rather than trying to move on, or to capture Kabul. For example, upon defeating government troops in their own area, Jaghourī Hazaras would hide in waiting ready to defend their positions, rather than moving on to aid other Hazara rebels in Ghazni. Lack of proper facilities also meant that the rebels had neither proper weapons, nor military training. Their army commanders were simply their *Mirs*, whose only qualification was bravery.

Most importantly, the ordinary Hazaras who made up the fighting force of the rebels, were not always fully committed to their *Mirs*. Some bore more hatred for their *Mirs* than for the Amirs of Kabul, and if they had not been fighting in defence of religion, tribal traditions, and tribal lands, many would have changed sides. As Temirkhanov writes, during the second rebellion of January–August 1893, some rebels attacked both government forces and their *Mirs*. For example, Gholam Shah, The Hazara Mir of Mina Nishin, was killed by his own people (Temirkhanov, 1980: 163).

Abdur Rahman also exploited this weakness during the rebellion of 1892, by promising peasants and ordinary Hazaras that once in control of Hazarajat, he would see to their grievances. The poor peasants who were, on the one hand ignorant of the real nature of the government, and who on the other hand had suffered much at the hands of their own *Mirs*, prayed for the fall of the Hazarajat (Orazgani, 1913: 76, 77).

### *External factors*

Contrary to the disunity of the Hazara rebels, government forces had a united leadership with specific goals. They also had proper military training and sophisticated arms supplied by the British Government of India. Furthermore, government forces were composed of soldiers of different tribes and peoples. Though most were Afghans, there were



also Uzbaks, Tajiks and even Hazaras. This created a dilemma for the Hazara rebels, who did not wish to kill the people of their fellow tribes, as had happened in the first assault on Orazgan. Government forces also simply outnumbered the rebels. They also always fought from a position of offensive, while the rebels, once successful in their region, waited in defence. It was the combination of these main factors which caused the failure of the uprisings, despite the fact that in their early stages, they had seriously threatened the rule of the Amir of Kabul.

#### **5.4 The consequences of the failure of the Hazara uprisings**

The advent and failure of the Hazara uprisings of 1890–93 brought about deep and fundamental changes in Hazara society. The old social structure was completely disbanded and replaced by a new order. These changes, brought about by force and at great cost, touched upon and overturned every aspect of Hazara life. Furthermore, these changes equally affected the whole of the social structure and life in Afghanistan permanently. It is for this reason also, that a close examination of the 1890s is necessary for the understanding of not just Hazara society in particular, but also the structure of society in Afghanistan in general.

In the last section we noted that the general uprisings of 1893 were eventually ended following negotiations between Abdur Rahman and Hazara leaders, but not without creating divisions among the rebelling Hazaras. The events following 1893 demonstrated that those Hazaras who had not trusted Abdur Rahman had been justified. For, soon after the negotiations were over in August 1893, Abdur Rahman ordered once again the arrest, and dispatch to Kabul, of all influential Hazara leaders and personalities, regardless of whether they had taken part in the uprisings or not. Acting on orders, government soldiers and officers rounded up all Hazara tribal and religious leaders and their families, confiscated their lands and belongings and looted their homes and *qalas*. From the Kalan Khan clan in Orazgan alone, inhabitants of the area surrounding Herat and non-participants in the uprisings, some 200 leaders were arrested and sent to Kabul, while a great number of ordinary members of the clan were heavily fined. In 1894, in order to track down those Hazara leaders in hiding, Abdur Rahman dispatched to Hazarajat an investigative group led by Nayeb Padsha Gul Khan and Sultan Ali Khan, son of Sardar Shir Ali Jaghouri. By March 1895 the force had



traced, arrested, and sent to Kabul, 802 leading Hazaras (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 828, 841, 846, 919, 926, 928, 931, 934–5, 945).

Those arrested were charged with 'treason against the Afghan and Hazara peoples', as well as the state. Of these, a small number were sent into exile to the environs of Kabul, Jalalabad and Bagram. Some 8000 Hazara women and girls were put to work in factories in Kabul. Hundreds more were given as rewards to Afghan soldiers. The rest of the men, forming the majority of those captured, were executed in Kabul (ibid.: 934, 944–5, 975). The intentions of Abdur Rahman towards his Hazara subjects had become clear: to empty the Hazarajat of the Hazaras.

### *Social relations and structure*

The ethnic policies pursued by Abdur Rahman resulted in the direct destruction of traditional Hazara social structure and its replacement by a new one. After 1893 there were no signs of the previous internal independence and autonomy of the Hazarajat; all matters of leadership and government were now in the hands of government sent or paid officers and rulers. The new representatives, known as the *Arbabs* were chosen from among the local inhabitants, but were paid a regular salary by Kabul. Every locality in Hazarajat was run by a few *Arbabs*, employed to aid the Afghan rulers (Temirkhanov, 1980: 176).

The term *Mir* was gradually completely abandoned and replaced by *Arbab* and *Malik*, still in fairly current use in the Hazarajat. The religious leadership and hierarchy, previously headed by Mullahs and Sayyeds, was also transformed, with the majority sent into exile in distant parts of the country. Measures were also taken to actually replace the religious significance of the Shia leadership and faith among the Hazaras, and to impose on them Sunni Islam in its stead. In the locality of the Day Zangi Hazaras, several *Hanafi* (one of four branches of Sunni Islam) mosques were built and led by Qazi Abdul Qayom, while the Hazaras were forced to embrace Hanafi beliefs (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 1065).

These Afghan rulers and Sunni clergy took advantage of the unruly situation in the Hazarajat to further their own personal interests. Complaints to Kabul about their behaviour by the locals were not only ineffective, but actually inevitably aggravated the situation. Although the Afghan rulers were often called to Kabul following such complaints, they were never held responsible, but were simply

reposted, unchastised, to other parts of the Hazarajat. Certain documented complaints exist; an example was one sent to Abdur Rahman by the Hazaras of Jaghourī in May 1896, complaining of the brutality and intolerable repression by their Afghan rulers and clergy (ibid.: 1213). Every ruler was guarded by government soldiers; every village was additionally assigned two soldiers responsible for collecting taxes and enforcing order, whose expenses were paid for by the villagers.

Clearly then, it was now the Afghan rulers, Sunni clergy and local *Arbabs* who formed the backbone of the new structure of Hazara society; a society now based on the relationship of victor and victim, with the Afghan victorious and the Hazaras victimized.

### *Economic relations*

On 11 April 1894, orders were given to confiscate all grazing land in the Hazarajat, with the stipulation that under no circumstances should the Hazaras be allowed any longer to use these lands for the purpose of grazing their own cattle (Faiz, 1333, 1912 Vol. 3: 855, 938, 986–7, 1011, 1070, 1159). These lands were then handed over to the leaders of Afghan nomads (Ferdinand, 1962: 128), who not only used this land for rearing their cattle, but also usurped land actually under cultivation by the Hazaras. Efforts to protect their land and stop the nomads ended in the death of several Hazaras each time, and the looting of their property and families, with the local rulers always siding with the Afghan intruders. In 1893, a regular route was mapped out by the government for the nomads, through to the Hazarajat. Far from any fines being levied on these nomadic intruders for trespassing and damaging Hazara crops, they were easily able to force their animals onto cultivated Hazara lands in return for bribes paid to local Afghan rulers (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 925–6, 934, 1021, 1031, 1100, 1237–8). Thus the Afghan nomads were able to gradually bring much of the arable land of the Hazarajat under their grazing domain; these areas included Day Zangai, Behsud, Day Kundi, Navor, Malistan and Jaghourī (ibid.: 1100).

This policy of replacing cultivated land by grazing land had the obvious effects of reducing agricultural production and arable land on the one hand, and of destroying Hazara animal husbandry on the other (ibid.: 855, 925–6, 987). The nomads were not only ignorant about, and unable to, farm arable land (Ferdinand, 1962: 125), but in fact took to using traditionally cultivated Hazara land as regular

grazing grounds. Indeed, their nomadic way of life precluded any interest on their part in settling on the available arable lands. Instead, they moved on and off the land according to the season, covering an area from the coldest parts of northern and central Afghanistan to the Indus valley of British India (Pakistan today), trading part of the year, and rearing animals the rest of the time. These nomads neither sent soldiers to serve in the army, nor indeed accepted the permanent control of the central government in Kabul. This constant movement ensured them a high degree of political and economic independence and immunity.

While the consequences of the policy of transforming farming land into grazing land had an enormous and irrevocable impact on Hazara society, Hazara industry suffered too. According to Temirkhanov,

Hazara industry was also badly destroyed. Several industrial trades were completely abandoned, such as ironmongery. The Hazaras were banned even from owning horses and owning or making weapons. (1980: 180)

However, the nomads were not the only major cause of the destruction of traditional Hazara society. Abdur Rahman's economic policies had much wider implications. As was mentioned earlier some sixteen types of tax were introduced by him. The Hazaras paid yet further additional taxes imposed on them alone. Some examples of these additional taxes were as follows:

- (a) The *nafs* tax, imposed in 1897, requiring every Hazara man, woman and child (or *nafs*) to pay 2 *qerans* (1 Kabuli *rupee* was equal to 4 *qerans*) per head, annually; this was increased to 4 *qerans* in 1901.
- (b) The *do puli* tax (100 *puls* was equal to 1 Kabuli *rupee*), requiring every Hazara family to pay 2 *qerans* per family, annually. This was also known as the household tax, and was still imposed until the 1970s.
- (c) Tax paid to the family of dead soldiers, of 9 *qerans*. Furthermore, Hazara families were responsible for the feeding and general expenses of soldiers sent to collect these taxes. Records show that at that time the Hazaras of Ghazni, alone, paid a total of 99,755 *rupees* annually to the government (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 1107).
- (d) In addition to these there was the land tax. This was not paid on the basis of annual produce, but on the basis of the size and type

of land. Thus farms were measured each year and a different sum levied. This had the effect of forcing farmers to reduce the size of their farms. By 1901, the land tax had increased by 1.5 per cent. Non-arable land surrounding each village was also taxed, paid for by villagers. Records show that according to official figures, the Hazaras of Ghazni alone paid 154,795 rupees in land tax, annually (ibid.: 1010, 1100, 1172).

- (e) Another exceptional tax levied on the Hazaras only was an animal tax. Each type of animal had its own tax: cows and donkeys had higher taxes than sheep and goats.
- (f) A further tax was the 'blood tax' (*maliyat-e khun*). In 1898, the government planned to recruit a battalion of Hazara soldiers, later increased to eight battalions, made up of Hazara soldiers and Afghan officers. Each was to number 100 troops. In 1900, a plan was laid down to choose one soldier out of every eight Hazaras to serve in the regular army. The responsibility and expense of arming and paying for the chosen man lay with the other seven; they were to pay the government 600 *qerans* for his weapons and 192 *qerans* annually for his expenses, for three years. If for some reason (death, for instance) the chosen soldier was unable to complete his service another was to be chosen to replace him. The sum of money spent on the requirements, as well as actually serving in the army, were referred to as 'blood tax' (Temirkhanov, 1980: 183–4). In cases of failure to pay all taxes due, the wife and children of the failing Hazara were sold as slaves, an action legalised by Abdur Rahman in March 1894.

The counting and analysis of the various taxes imposed by Abdur Rahman is a lengthy task and could be the subject of a whole study in its own right; my aim here is to list but a few. The final, most brutal and inhuman tax requiring mention here was the 'tax on the sale of slaves'. The slave trade had become so lucrative that it was recognized as a legal source of income. According to official government reports, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in Qandahar alone, the government earned some 60,000 to 70,000 rupees annually from the trading of slaves. The price of a male or female slave ranged from 120 to 160 rupees. Thus, in just Qandahar, annually, some 7,200 Hazara men and women were sold as slaves (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 969, 989, 1116, 1132, 1226, 1228).

*Emigration and depopulation*

One of the fundamental consequences of the failed uprisings was the significant change in the physical structure and human geography of the Hazarajat. According to Temirkhanov, until the end of the 19th century, there were no considerable Hazara communities in Afghanistan's neighbouring countries (1980: 190). In other words, until that time the Hazaras inhabited the areas only of central Afghanistan known as the Hazarajat. This area, shown fairly accurately on maps in earlier sections, covered the northern and southern plains of the Hindu Kush and Baba mountains, and measured more than three times the area of today's Hazarajat. The extent of the destruction wrought by Abdur Rahman against the Hazaras can easily be seen in this enormous geographic reduction. Much land was taken from the Hazaras and given as booty to Pashtun nomads. Some of the most arable areas such as Orozgan, Ajaristan, Chorah and Dehrawood, were completely depopulated of Hazaras and taken over by Afghan nomads. Similar depopulation took place in the north. The Hazaras exiled from these areas were forced to flee to neighbouring countries, where they lay the foundations for pockets of Hazara populations outside of Afghanistan.

In the opinion of the present writer, the reduction in the population of the Hazara peoples was the most significant intention of Abdur Rahman's anti-Hazara campaign. Although it is impossible to arrive at the exact number of Hazaras killed or forced into exile during these years, it is clearly documented that more than half of the Hazara population was destroyed or forced out. Of the tribes mostly destroyed (some 90 per cent destroyed) were the: Day Chopan, Daya, Pulad (Fuladi), Ajristan, Chorah, Orazgan, Zavoli (Zabuli), Pahlawan, Bobash, Bobak, Sultan Ahmad, Shooi, Shirah and Minishin. A similar fate befell the Tala and Barfak, Goori and Kabuli Hazaras (Temirkhanov, 1980: 152, 174–5, 190). Others seriously reduced were Shaikh Ali, Turkman, Day Kundi, Qarabagh, Jaghour and Yakau Lang. In a report sent to Abdur Rahman from one of his officials in Yakau Lang in (1894) it is written that:

From the total population of Yekau Lang, 100 families of the Mullas, Karbalayis and Sayyeds have been arrested and sent to Kabul. One thousand families from among the Mirs, Mullas, Karbalayis and Zawar have fled; two thousand and one hundred people have been killed, by the army or from starvation. Now



## *Socio-political change in Hazara society since the 1890s*

some 700 families only, none of whom are Sayyeds, Karbalayis or Zawars, remain in Yekau Lang. (Faiz, 1333, 1912, Vol. 3: 1038)

The people of Behsud were probably the least damaged, for they were regarded as supporters of the government, and regularly paid their taxes. An accurate figure of their numbers exists. They numbered some 20,000 families; in 1894, when Mulla Muhammad Qazi and Mulla Muhammad Nazif, the mufti of Behsud, were asked to count heads for the annual tax, they reported:

of some 20,000 families in Behsud, 6,400 families remain, and 13,600 have either been killed or have fled. (ibid.: 1031)

These few documented examples offer a very good indication of the extent of the depopulation after 1893. This vast reduction in population, caused by the various factors outlined above, brought about far-reaching and permanent changes in the social structure, tribal traditions, culture, economy, and political leadership of the Hazaras. Temirkhanov writes:

The defeat of the rebellion through the use of repressive measures by Abdur Rahman brought about violent changes in all Hazara relations: economic, social, political and cultural. The traditional method of the division of land on tribal, clan and Khan basis was abandoned. The feudal and ruling class of Hazara society were completely wiped out (as a result of massacres, forceful resettlement, escape into neighbouring countries). Several tribes were wiped out in the Hazarajat (e.g., Zavoli, Sultan Ahmad, Ajristan). In time, traditional tribal relations were weakened and eventually destroyed. Most importantly, as a result of marriage with Afghans a new generation of Afghan-Hazaras was created . . . Large-scale emigration abroad resulted in the dispersing of the population and the formation of Hazara societies in Iran and British India. (1980: 190)

The emigration of the Hazaras took place in three different directions. Those inhabiting northern Hindu Kush (mostly Tatar Hazaras) fled towards Czarist Russia; some of these later emigrated to Iran, but others remained in the southern-most cities of Czarist Russia. Some, such as those inhabiting the north-west Hazarajat, emigrated to Iran. According to Orazgani, they settled in the villages around the city of

## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

Mashhad, designated to them by the then Qajar king (1913: 96). These Hazaras later became known as *Barbari* in Iran, but themselves prefer to be referred to as *Khavari*. Another section, from the south-east of Afghanistan, fled to British India and settled in Shalkot, or Quetta today. This last group in Quetta, forms the third largest population of Hazaras, after the Iranian Hazaras and the Hazaras inside Afghanistan, and exercises great socio-political influence in Baluchistan, in Pakistan. In the following chapter, I shall look more closely at these new Hazara communities, within and outside Afghanistan.

## Chapter 6

# Old people, new societies

*au taraf-e auriz kho mora.*

Water flows towards the waterfall.

A Hazaragi proverb

During two and a half centuries of its existence since 1747, Afghanistan has experienced two large-scale mass migrations, both resulting directly from violent campaigns of massacre carried out by ruling regimes of the time. One was (and remains today) the mass migration of the past nineteen years (1978–97), and the other the post-1893 migrations. During this first period of migration, which began at the start of the last decade of the 19th century and continued until the first decade of the 20th century, hundreds of thousands of Afghanistan's inhabitants sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Of these, many remained and settled for good, never to return.

These migrants, or refugees, from the period of Abdur Rahman's reign (1880–1901) were composed of all ethnic groups within Afghanistan. Hundreds of Pashtun families fled the country because of feuding among different clans, and settled in India and Iran. Also forced to flee for fear of their lives were the majority of Amir Shir Ali Khan's supporters. Two groups, however, suffered the most and so numbered very high among the migrants: the Hazaras, and the non-Hazara Shi'as. The majority of the non-Hazara Shi'a population, such as the Shi'as from Herat, Kabul, Qandahar and Mazar-e Sharif, took refuge in Iran and settled in the vicinity of the city of Mashhad. According to estimates, nearly half of the earlier population of Herati Shi'as settled permanently in Iran; to this day over a century later, most of these Herati, Afghani and Kabuli families in Iran have kept their original regional family names, despite their new Iranian nationality.<sup>1</sup>

By far the largest proportion of refugees was formed by the Hazaras, some 90 per cent, who fled to Czarist Russia, British India and Qajar Iran. Hazara displacement took place also within Afghanistan; many of the Hazaras now residing in Kabul and northern Afghanistan are migrants and descendants of migrants from this period. This displacement, carried out as a result of the depopulation policy of Abdur Rahman, was intended to pre-empt and indeed destroy any potential political or future military resistance. Thus concentrations of Hazara populations were broken up and smaller groups forced to live in distant areas of Afghanistan. These Hazaras refugees were called *farari* (escapee).

Interestingly, at this same time, large numbers of nomad Pashtuns from outside Afghanistan were being settled in areas throughout the country. The Pashtuns who were settled in Afghanistan in this way were generally known as the *sarhadi* (border people) or *naqilin* (transferred). They were originally settled on good arable land in areas on the outskirts of cities. Gradually, these nomads became accustomed to settled life in the city and were able to participate in the local economy, and send their children to school, usually to the military academies. These Pashtuns, who hold both Afghanistani and Pakistani nationalities, are known as *do-tazkiraye* (dual nationality).

The land given to these Pashtun settlers was usually land which had been cultivated for generations by Uzbek, Tajik, and Hazara farmers. (Haqshinas, 1984: 380–1) This land was gradually transferred to Pashtun owners as part of the government's policy of re-distributing the population of Afghanistan. This was done with the aim of concentrating Pashtun settlers in pockets throughout the country in order to redress the balance of non-Pashtuns in favour of the Pashtun population. The purpose of this resettlement by the government was to strengthen its own ethnic base, consolidate its political standing, and legitimize the Pashtunization of Afghanistan. To a certain extent this programme of displacement and relocation proved successful in its intended aims. For example, Qarloq Hazaras who had been exiled to the environs of Khanabad, have only recently rejoined their original clan members and relations, after more than 100 years, finding themselves together in refugee camps in Quetta. In interviews which I conducted with immigrant Hazaras in Quetta in the summer of 1988, it was revealed that many immigrants had only become aware of and acquainted with their clan and tribal roots while staying in these refugee camps. In the words of Mohammad Nassim, one of five primary school teachers in Refugee Camp No. 5 in Panch Pai in Quetta:

We were Shi'a until four generations ago; to this day Shi'a traditions are kept by the Qalloq Hazaras; Shi'a names are still very common; also Shi'a religious anniversaries such as the martyrdom of Imam Hussain are respected. Our grandfathers, though, were first forced to hide their Shi'ism out of fear of Abdur Rahman; later generations, however, simply converted to Sunnism. The most significant factor in this conversion was the lack of contact with the Hazarajat and Hazaras elsewhere in Afghanistan.

Another example is the case of the Pusht-e Band Hazaras, whose existence remained completely unknown to the Hazaras of Hazarajat until the 1980s (Gharjistani, 1988: 280–1).<sup>2</sup>

The social evolution and changes which have taken place in the lives of the Hazara people, both inside and outside Afghanistan, have received little attention, academic or otherwise. Yet the study of these changes and the understanding of the role of the Hazaras throws much needed light on the history of national and regional politics in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries of Iran, British India and today's Pakistan, over the past ninety years.

### **6.1 The Hazaras in Pakistan**

According to Khuda Nazar Qambari, research assistant to Bacon,<sup>3</sup> long before 1893, the Hazaras were accustomed to travelling to India and Iran for both commercial and non-commercial reasons, but while some emigrated to these countries, mass migrations were unprecedented before that period:

In normal years a considerable number of Hazaras used to come to India to work as labourers, particularly at heavy work such as quarrying, etc. (Bunbury, 1949: 9)

Normal years here refers to the years preceding the first war between Britain and Afghanistan (1838–42). Thus, by the middle of the 19th century, there was already much movement between Hazarajat and India. Indeed many from among these migrants had joined the ranks of the British India Army by 1838:

The first contact between the British and the Hazaras seems to have been just before the first [Anglo] Afghan War, when some Hazaras served in 'Broadfoot's Sappers' in about 1839–40 (ibid.: 5).



## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

Despite these movements, however, before 1893, there were no pockets of Hazara refugee populations to be found in British India. It was clearly after 1893 that actual Hazara communities began forming in Shalkut (today's Quetta) in Baluchistan:

In 1903–04, however, owing to extreme persecution by the Afghans, large numbers of refugees poured over the frontier into India. (ibid.: 9)

This large number of Hazaras, among other Afghanistanis, for whom not even an estimate is on record, settled in Quetta, the provincial centre of Baluchistan in today's Pakistan. Here they gradually came to form the third largest community of Hazaras outside Afghanistan, and are now known as Pakistani Hazaras. Though arriving as refugees, these Hazaras were nevertheless able, in the space of less than a decade, to settle into and benefit from the structure of society in British India, as it was then. These Pakistani Hazaras assumed a significant role in the socio-political life of the region, both during the British Raj and after partition. This role is better understood if looked at in two separate phases.

### *The Hazaras and the British*

Although there were small numbers of Hazara labourers serving in the British India Army before 1838, it was not until 1901 that more formal contact was established between the Hazaras and representatives of British India. For until 1904, Hazara interest in serving in the British Army in India was the need for employment and livelihood. After 1904, however, political and military relations between the two parties were put on a formalised and mutual basis, as had been the case between the Afghans and the British and Russians since the early 18th century.

The Hazaras had been violently repressed inside Afghanistan; in order to gain socio-political recognition and recover their land and to avenge themselves, the Hazaras needed the help of a strong ally. The British appeared the best choice, especially as Hazara efforts in other directions had revealed a lack of interest and concern on the part of their other neighbours. The British for their part were concerned primarily with their own interests; they had already been defeated twice in Afghanistan and were looking for a means of redressing this imbalance. Indeed, the British were already preparing for a third assault:

Lord Kitchener, at that time Commander-in-Chief in India, while touring the [N.W.] Frontier in 1904, directed Major C.W. Jacob to raise a battalion of Hazara Pioneers. Previous to this, the only Hazaras in the Indian Army were those enlisted in the 124th and 126th Baluchistan Infantry and a troop in the Guides Cavalry. (Bunbury, 1949: 10)

It was thus that Major C. W. Jacob (later Field Marshal Sir Claud W. Jacob), by combining the 124th and 126th Baluchistan Infantries, created the famous 106th Hazara Pioneers:

The composition of the Battalion was eight companies of Hazaras and their permanent peace station was Quetta. (ibid.: 11)

At this point the Pioneers were mostly engaged in non-combative service such as road building and other heavy work.

This careful preparation by the British for a third assault on Afghanistan with the aid of the Hazaras, however, was interrupted by the outbreak of World War One, at which time the 106th Hazara Pioneers was despatched to fight in Mesopotamia. Subsequently, heavy losses forced the British to further supplement the 106th Hazara Pioneers by recruiting from among Hazaras in Mashhad, in Iran. In time these Hazara soldiers and officers were to take part in many campaigns: in France in 1915 where the company served with distinction, in the NWFP, Kurdistan, Baghdad, East and North Africa, and in Waziristan in 1923–24.

The existence of trained and experienced Hazara soldiers and officers employed in the British India Army was of great concern to, and seen as a great threat by, the government in Kabul. Nevertheless, despite the aid of the Hazaras, the third war between Britain and Afghanistan, which broke out in 1919 after the coming to power of King Amanullah, who declared the position of Afghanistan to be that of a non-aligned member state of the League of Nations, also ended in defeat for the British.

Shah Amanullah, who implemented fundamental changes in Afghanistan, banned slavery and granted Hazaras equal status with other groups. As a result of these changes the Hazaras in Quetta, who were now contemplating returning to Afghanistan, voiced their dissatisfaction with their British allies. Thus many Hazaras took advantage of the opportunity and returned to Afghanistan. One such Hazara was Ustad Gholam Nabi, ex-Hazara Pioneer and supporter of Amanullah Khan, for years resident in Quetta, where I had the

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opportunity to speak with him about his life in the summer of 1988.<sup>4</sup> Another example was Major (later General) Ali Dost, who joined Amanullah's government and became one of his closest allies and supporters.

The changes in Afghanistan, along with the economic crisis threatening Britain during the 1920s and 1930s, brought about the dissolution of the 106th Hazara Pioneers:

Finally, the inevitable had come in 1932–33 when, as a result of the financial crisis, all Pioneer Regiments in India, including the Hazara Pioneers were disbanded. (Bunbury, 1949: 13)

It should also be mentioned here that after 1919 the Hazaras were allowed to serve in the army in Afghanistan, receiving almost the same pay and rights as the other ethnic groups.

The reason behind the formation of the Hazara regiments had been a mutual agreement reached by the immigrant Hazaras and the British. On the one hand, the Hazaras had hoped to use the opportunity to secure British aid in order to avenge themselves and to improve their future status; the British on the other hand, who still hoped to succeed in Afghanistan, had sought to secure the cooperation of the Hazaras in return for protection. Indeed, successive cabinets in Kabul repeatedly requested that the British government not deploy the Hazara regiment along the border with Afghanistan (India Office Library and Records, R/12/55).

After 1919, the Government of Afghanistan requested that the British no longer admit Hazara recruits into the British Army, since the Hazaras were now considered as being of Afghani nationality. (Bunbury, 1949: 13–14)

Relations between the Hazaras and the British, which lasted some three decades, did not prove particularly fruitful or satisfactory for either side. With the demise of the British Empire in the Indian sub-continent, these relations soon disintegrated and disappeared.<sup>5</sup>

## *Pakistani Hazaras*

The formation, on 14 August 1947, of Pakistan and thus the creation of a new nation in the region, highlighted most brutally the cultural, tribal, language and religious plurality of the area. The establishment of an Islamic state based on the notion of 'national unity' created the political space in which the importance of the equality of the

individual members of the new state could be reviewed. This fundamental consideration secured great support, for the aspiring new government, from the region's different clans and tribal groups. The Hazaras living in what had now become Pakistan were among the first groups to accept and endorse the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and to send representatives to Karachi, then capital of Pakistan, as a sign of their support. According to existing documents, the first group of Hazaras, led by the aforementioned Ustad Gholam Nabi, arrived in Delhi on 1 October 1946 for a meeting with Jinnah, almost a year before partition eventually took place (*Dawn*, 1 October 1946).

The role of the Hazaras in this new society was soon established. However, although well integrated into Pakistan society, it was not until 10 May 1962, that their status was formally first declared by the government of Pakistan, Ministry of States and Frontier Regions, Rawalpindi:

I am directed to refer to . . . say that Govt of Pakistan agree [sic] that the Afghan Tribes, as detailed below which are at present treated as semi-indigenous tribes of Pakistan and they may be allowed to enjoy all facilities as are available to other indigenous/local tribes: 1. Hazaras, 2. Durrani, 3. Yousofzai, 4. Ghilzai. (Owtadolajam, 1976: 220)

Later, on 15 June 1963, their status was formally declared by the City Magistrate in Quetta:

This is to certify that, [the] Hazara tribe has been declared as a local tribe of Quetta Division by the Government of Pakistan. (See Appendix 2)

Thus, the Hazaras who had migrated to British India at the turn of the century found themselves, some sixty years later, nationals of Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

These Pakistani Hazaras, who form the third largest Hazara community outside Afghanistan, differ in many ways from the Hazaras of Afghanistan and Iran. Contrary to the Hazaras who emigrated to Iran, the Pakistani Hazaras have maintained to a large extent a strong sense of their origin and traditional identity, along with their tribal and social structure. While present in every area of life in Pakistan and enjoying high-ranking positions in the government as well as the private sector, the Hazaras have nevertheless remained attached to their tribal social structure, religion and traditions.

Although politically not very active previously, they have assumed, since the 1970s, an increasingly active position and high profile. It was during the 1970s and the period of the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan, that major changes began taking place in Afghanistan. With the overthrow of the monarchy in 1973 and the emergence of a republic formed by the King's cousin, Daud Khan, the dormant issue of 'Pashtunistan' was once again raised, leading to a distancing of relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In retaliation for the provocation of the Pashtuns and the Baluchis in Pakistan by Daud, Bhutto set about supporting and encouraging the political aspirations of the Hazaras in Quetta and the then Muslim Youth Association of Afghanistan (now known as *Hizb-e Islami* and *Jami'at-e Islami*). It was during this period that the Pakistani Hazaras formally organized themselves in opposition to the government of Afghanistan and formed the *Tanzeem-e Nasl-e Naw-e Hazara-ye Moghol* (Hazara Moghol New Generation Organisation, hereafter referred to as *Tanzeem*) (Anwar, 1989: 77–83). During this period of strained relations between the two countries, the Hazaras took advantage of the opportunity and re-established contact with the Hazarajat. Among other activities, the Pakistani Hazaras, now well organized, introduced into the Hazarajat a wealth of Persian language journals. The *Tanzeem* itself published a monthly journal in Quetta in Farsi and Urdu, called *Zulfikar*, which soon found many readers inside Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria. With the unfolding of events after 1978 and the flood of refugees from Afghanistan into Iran and Pakistan, and particularly of Hazaras into Quetta and Mashhad, many Hazara clan and tribal members were reunited in these countries after some ninety years of separation. Although scattered throughout Pakistan, the major concentration of Hazaras is in the capital of Baluchistan, Quetta, where many mosques, *imambara* (*takiya khana*), *madrassa* (traditional Islamic schools) and modern schools, along with several social organizations, are run by them. They also publish three monthly journals in Farsi and Urdu, including one for women.

While they have held on to their traditional values and social structure to a great extent, these Pakistani Hazaras are nevertheless distinct from the Hazaras in Hazarajat. For example, the two speak with very different accents. While the latter speak a very pure Persian with a Hazaragi accent and dialect, the former speak a Persian greatly influenced by Urdu and English, to the point where other Hazaras understood them only with great difficulty. Another major difference



is the diffusion, among these Pakistani Hazaras, of those tribal prejudices and feuds which are still very much in existence inside Afghanistan. In the place of such prejudices and feuds, a unity of identity has emerged, which sometimes borders on racism. At times this strong sense of identity has led to the glorification of Changiz Khan, who is hailed as the true father of all Hazaras, and the supreme politico-military leader of all time (Gharjistani, 1988: 24).<sup>7</sup> Variations on the name of Changiz or Moghol, such as Changizi and Moghol Zadah, are seen on shops, street names, restaurants, hotels, and in people's names throughout Quetta, alongside posters of Changiz.

Such an extreme sense of identity is rarely seen among the Hazaras inside Afghanistan, and if so is predominantly at the level of individual Hazaras. In an interview with the writer in the summer of 1988, Misbah, a young Hazara student, later to become a lecturer at Baluchistan University, explained the reason for this excessive, and as they agreed, ill-inspired, sense of self-identification:

We realize that Changhiz is not our real ancestor. But, the question here is not one of genealogy, but of politics and history. By identifying ourselves with Changiz, we gain respect and social status among other ethnic groups in Pakistan. In any case, as far as foreign scholars are concerned, we *are* the descendants of Changhiz Khan's soldiers. Changhiz was no worse than many other historical figures, and every race needs a socio-historical figurehead. Let our Abdur Rahman be Changhiz Khan.

The Hazaras in Quetta and indeed throughout Pakistan enjoy many privileges and are often to be found in the highest civilian and military positions, such as General Musa, son of Sardar Yazdan Bakhsh originally from Jaghory district of Ghazni, who was the first Hazara governor of Baluchistan.<sup>8</sup> Hazara students, girls and boys, enjoy the best opportunities in education, without any signs of discrimination. In fact, one could say that the Hazaras in Pakistan enjoy a much higher level of education and standard of living than the Hazaras inside Afghanistan, who to this day suffer from institutional and personal discrimination on a daily basis. One of the most recent developments in relations between the Hazaras and other Pakistanis, though not widespread, is inter-marriage, especially with the Baluchis.

Despite this evident integration, there is a very powerful feeling of attachment to the Hazarajat and Afghanistan. The greater percentage of the Hazaras I spoke to in the summer of 1988 repeatedly expressed

feelings to this effect: 'this [Pakistan] is not our fatherland. We have no roots here. At the first opportunity we shall go back.' Khuda Nazar Qambari, himself a third generation Pakistani Hazara, told me in an interview:

although a small minority of Hazaras who have established themselves here and have gained much wealth here will not return, the majority of the Hazaras would not stay. At the first sign of the presence of a powerful government in Kabul and the solution of the question of Pashtunistan, the majority will return. I myself shall stay, but my sons always talk of returning. (1988)

It was on this topic that a conference was organized by the *Tanzeem* on 15 July 1988, in Quetta, where the Hazaras of Quetta gathered in large numbers. All those who spoke at the conference, and indeed the final resolution of the conference, echoed one dominant desire: 'We shall return to Afghanistan, our homeland, the land of our roots, our traditions, values and history.'

## 6.2 Iranian Hazaras: the Barbaris or Khawaris

The relationship of the Hazaras with Iran is historical and cultural, based partly on a shared language, Farsi, but primarily on Shi'a Islam, the state religion of Iran. This common religion has for centuries provided a special association with Iran among the Hazaras, both those living in Afghanistan and abroad. For generations, thousands of Hazara men and women have made long pilgrimages, on foot, horse-back, and camels, to the tombs of Shi'a Imams in Iran and Iraq. In fact such pilgrimages are held in nearly as much respect by the Hazaras as the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca. Upon their return, pilgrims are given various titles: *zawar* for those returning from Mashhad, *Karbalayi* and *Najafi* for those returning from Karbala and Najaf; even pilgrims to lesser shrines such as those in Qom (Iran) and Kazimain (Iraq) are titled correspondingly, all suggesting the significance attached by Hazaras to Shi'a shrines. Despite their constant movement between various countries in the past, however, Hazara pilgrims and travellers had always returned to Afghanistan.

### *Iranian Hazaras before the 1890s*

Long before the foundation of modern Afghanistan in 1747, the Hazaras had strong links with Iran. Before the creation of the formal

international boundaries recognized today, the Hazaras regularly fought in the armies of Iranian kings. Indeed, until the events of the 1890s, the Hazaras made up the majority of the population of today's Herat and northwestern Afghanistan, at that time part of Iran. Any ruler that wished to rule Herat needed the collaboration of Hazara leaders: 'without doubt, the presence of warriors such as the Hazaras could tip the military balance' (Bayat, 1991: 18). Bayat classifies the Hazaras of the time in two groups: the Hazaras of the Hazarajat, and the Hazaras of Badghisat. According to Bayat, the latter inhabited Khorasan province in northeastern Iran long before the 1890s at the time of the foundation of modern Afghanistan by Nader Afshar, and served the Iranian kings of the time:

During the reign of Nader [Afshar], the Hazaras, in particular those led by Mir Khoshai Beg who had become ruler of the Oimaqiyah Hazaras and the Jamshidi tribe at the beginning of the reign of Nader [Afshar], were present in many military excursions both in western and eastern Iran as part of the Iranian army. (Bayat, 1991: 14)

Later, during the reign of the Zandiyah dynasty in Shiraz (1749–94) also, the Hazaras fought in the Iranian army; Mohammad Hossain Khan Zand Hazara was one example, who was killed in the battles at Arsanjan (Shirazi, 1986: 36). In the Qajar era (1785–1925), the head of Khorasan's Hazaras, along with 200 of his men, are known to have served Mohammad Vali Mirza, son of Fath Ali Shah (1797–1834) and Khorasan's governor (Bayat, 1991: 15). Until the 1850s, between 2000 to 5000 Hazara households inhabited Jam and Bakharz in Khorasan province. During the 1860s, however, many returned to Herat, while the remainder were resettled by the Qajar government in Esfarain. During this resettlement many died or were scattered throughout the region. Later, those in Esfarain were moved again, this time to Mashhad (ibid.: 18–20). It is thus clear that Hazara communities existed in today's Iran long before the mass migration of the 1890s, and furthermore that Hazara forces took active part in the internal conflicts of the country.

### *Iranian Hazaras after the 1890s*

When the events in 1893 precipitated the mass exodus of Hazaras from Hazarijat, many Hazara families took refuge in Iran. These Hazaras, who were joined on the way by other Shi'as from Kabul,

Herat and Ghazni, settled around Mashhad. Subsequently, however, as a result of the unfavourable conditions, many Hazaras moved on to Quetta and joined the British India Army as recruits; many others remained until 17th December 1904, when under the general asylum announced by Habibullah (1901–19) and later by Amanullah (1919–29), some returned to Afghanistan and resettled on their lands (Temirkhanov, 1980: 191). Some, however, remained in Iran for good and made up the new Hazara communities in and around Mashhad.

Unfortunately, little exists by way of documentation on the Hazara refugees in Iran. Perhaps the only available source on the earliest days of Hazara refugees in Iran is a book written by Shah Ibrahim Shah Alami, published some 70 years ago. Shah Ibrahim was the son of Sayed Mohammad Ali Shah, and grand son of Sayyed Shah Alam, himself a scholar and *Sufi* of great respect and influence, whose tomb is in Jighatu in Ghazni, next to that of Sultan Mahmud. Shah Alami *Sayyeds*, in both Iran and Afghanistan, are descendants of this same family. Nowadays, they are known in Afghanistan as Alamshahi.

In 1895, Sayyed Mohammad Ali Shah fled to Mashhad, escaping an assassination attempt during the reign of Abdur Rahman, and settled in the nearby village of Jam, where he died ten years later. His son, Shah Ibrahim, wrote the book *Tarikh-e Halat-e Ill-e Barbari*,<sup>10</sup> published in 1929, the same year in which he finished his studies at the Islamic school (*Madrasa*) in Qom. His book is a unique Farsi text written by a victim and emigrant of Abdur Rahman's reign of terror. Though substantial in its collation and description of Hazara-Afghan relations and of the repression of the Hazaras by Abdur Rahman, it has less on the Hazaras in Iran. However, what material is included is of great use and relevance. According to this book, the Hazaras who migrated to Iran

settled mostly in Khorasan, northeast Iran, where they tended animals, farmed and collected and dealt in firewood. A great proportion of these migrants, some 15,000 families, settled in Torbat-e Jam in the east of Mashhad, where they outnumbered the local inhabitants by forming some 9/10 of its population. Some 2,000 families settled in Rokh on the borders of Torbat-e Haydariya, a further 4,000 families settled in the southern regions of Shahan in Garmab. Another 4,000 settled in Pasa Koh in Kalat to the north of Mashhad, 3,000 in Chinaran, and the rest in Qouchan, Bojnurd, Nishapur, Bakharz, Zorabad and in and around Torbat-e Haydariya. (Shah Alami, 1929: 5–6)<sup>11</sup>



Both Shah Alami (1929: 4) and Foladian (1965: 95) write that the Hazaras in Khorasan fell into two groups: the Jaghouris and the Behsudis. It is my opinion, however, that as with the Hazaras in Pakistan, these also came from many different tribes, with the Jaghouris and the Behsudis forming the largest sections. Even Shah Alami himself writes elsewhere that 'their tribal origins are a mixture of those occupying different regions of Afghanistan' (Shah Alami, 1929: 6).

While no accurate figure exists regarding the number of Hazara migrants in Iran from that period, an estimate based on Shah Alami's figures would put the figure, at six per family, to a total of some 168,000. Later, Iranian census figures in 1956 indicated the Hazara population to be 300,000 (Owtadolajam, 1976: 201). On the basis of this growth, it is possible to put the number of Iranian Hazaras at approximately half a million, five times the current number of Paksitani Hazaras.

The Hazara migrants mostly confined themselves to agriculture and animal husbandry and, contrary to their counterparts in Pakistan, rarely achieved high-ranking positions in Iranian society. A common occupation among the Hazaras who gradually settled in the city of Mashhad was bread making, as was and is the case in Kabul.

And even now, the Hazaras mostly live in and around Mashhad, Asfara-en, Nishaboor and Fariman and in 750 villages situated around these cities. The majority of them are cultivators. In the above-mentioned cities too, a greater number of the Hazaras are employed in petty jobs, to mention for example, baking bread in bakeries. The population of the above-cited 750 villages is somewhere between 10 percent to 100 percent Hazaras. (Owtadolajam, 1976: 202)

While many Hazaras have prospered in Mashhad, Iranian Hazaras or the *Khawaris*, as they are known, have not retained their tribal and clan identities as have their counterparts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Hazaras in Iran appear, perhaps because of their common language and religion with the Iranians, to have dissolved and integrated into Iranian society, where apart from their physical facial features and a low socio-economic status, there is little to distinguish them from other inhabitants of Khorasan province. Perhaps the single remaining sign of their origin is the *Barbari* bread, one of several common types of bread eaten in Iran. The same bread is also baked by the Hazaras in Kabul and called *Panja Kash*, while it is generally



acknowledged that the best *Barbari* bread in Iran is from Mashhad, made by third generation Hazaras.<sup>12</sup>

It is not clear exactly when the Hazaras in Iran were granted Iranian nationality, in the way that they were in Pakistan in 1963. Documents at hand clearly indicate the reluctance of the Qajars to adopt a clear stand vis-à-vis the status of the immigrants flooding into Iran (*Barrasi-hay-e Tarikhi*, No. 3, Vol. 5: 299–300). However, what is known is that after the downfall of the last Qajar king and the seizure of power by Reza Khan, these Hazaras were recognised as Iranian nationals and recruited to serve in the Iranian army:

The Hazara tribes were identified as barbaris till 1315 A.H., [1936] when Mr Mohammad Yousuf Abghari, then a young Hazara student of the Officers' College . . . presented a petition to the Shahanshah praying that the name 'Barbari be changed into Khawari or Hazara as a tribal name. The application was granted . . . and according to a Farman or decree in 1316 [1937], 'Barbari' was changed into Khawari and the case was referred to the Premier's (sic.) office and the Army Staff by his Imperial Court for the purpose of enforcing it. Now all Hazaras in Iran take part in ceremonies and national celebrations under the official tribal title of Khawari. (Owtadolajam, 1976: 203)

The second wave of Hazara refugees has been pouring into Iran since the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979. In 1992, when plans were being drawn for their repatriation, the total number of refugees was estimated at around 2.8 to 3 million, of which by far the biggest majority were Hazara. As in the case of their fellow refugees in Pakistan, many of these are being reunited with their family and clan members in Iran after some ninety years of separation. These new immigrants, however, are not confined to settlements in and around Mashhad, or indeed to employment in agriculture. Today most Iranian factories, construction sites and generally heavy manual labour is dominated by migrant Hazaras.

There are other, more fundamental, differences between these recent refugees and those of the 1890s. This wave of migration had was not caused by Pashtun oppression and internal conflicts, but by the presence of a foreign occupier. Furthermore, these new immigrants were able to take advantage of the relatively open socio-political space available in Iran for them, compared to the total oppression they had experienced in Afghanistan, to develop social and political awareness. The result was of course both positive and negative.

Negative, because this new awareness and relative freedom to act led to the emergence of a multitude of political parties at odds with one another. However, this soon evolved into the positive development of a unified, on the whole fairly representative, political party, *Hizbe Wahdat*. Most important of all, these new migrants were determined to retain their tribal and ethnic identity. As a result of these factors, these escapees and refugees transformed themselves into an active political (and military) presence, willing to return to Afghanistan and Hazarajat to participate not just in the liberation of the country from its occupier, but also in their own destiny, and in Afghanistan's future. Because of the significance of the developments in Hazara society during the 1980s and 1990s, in Iran, as well as in Afghanistan, Chapters 8 and 9 respectively deal in detail with this period.

### 6.3 The Central Asian Hazaras

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, many Hazaras inhabiting areas near the northern border of Afghanistan sought refuge in Czarist Russia after 1893. Unfortunately, little information exists on these migrants. While migration to Russia had begun in the early 1890s, in 1897 the Hazaras were given official permission for group migrations (Temirkhanov, 1980: 174). Most Hazaras seem to have chosen to settle in Bukhara (Faiz, 1912, Vol. 3: 988–9), at least at first, and then to have moved on to other parts of Russia.

Despite a shortage of documentation, certain probabilities as to the experiences of these migrants can be surmised. It is conceivable that after some time many of the Hazaras who might otherwise have returned to Afghanistan at a later date were caught up in the events leading up to 1917 revolution and found themselves unable to leave. Bunbury tells an interesting story in relation to the Hazaras in Russia. in a section entitled *Hazaras in Siberia in 1919*, he writes the following:

Two British Officers of the 106th Hazara Pioneers, while serving with the British Military Mission to Siberia in 1919, were surprised to come across some Hazaras in Russian uniform. These, with many other Hazaras, had been working as labourers in rear of the Imperial Russian Armies during the Great war. After the revolution of 1917 and the collapse of the Russian Armies they were left stranded and unable to get back to their homes in Afghanistan. Accordingly, they joined and fought with

the White Russians against the Bolsheviks. The White Russian Army in Siberia was now also showing signs of giving way and once more these Hazaras wished to return home but were unable to do so. As two of them had once served in the 106th Hazara Pioneers, the above mentioned British Officers, who were returning to India, took them on as orderlies. They were able to bring them out of the country back to India, and from Quetta they were sent on to their own homes. (Bunbury, 1949: 24-5)

It is also possible that the majority of these Hazaras were Tatar. However they were not the only Hazaras. According to Temirkhanov, Mohammad Azim, one of the elders of the Mohammad Khaja clan, spent the last few years of his life in Tashkent, where he was given a regular stipend by the local governor. Mohammad Azim has also written a book in Farsi, *Hazaristan*, which was translated and published in Russian in 1898 (Temirkhanov, 1980: 4-5).

Thus, while some were able to leave Russia and go to Mashhad or return to Afghanistan, others soon found themselves unable to leave and so settled in what are today the Muslim states of Central Asia. Here, once again they failed to retain their Hazara identity, with the consequence that little evidence remains among these Hazaras of their traditional tribal and social life. Professor Iwamura, in a lecture delivered at a meeting of the Society of Oriental Researches, Kyoto, refers briefly to Hazaras in Central Asia:

in central Asia . . . there are several places called 'Hazara', 'Hazari' or 'Hazar'. They seem to be the names of tribes rather than the names of places. Although they appear as if they were the names of places on the map, when I asked the local people about it, I was given the impression that they are the names of tribes. (Iwamura, 1955: 200)

This was echoed by Professor Gankovsky, supervisor to Temirkhanov, whose thesis has been often cited here, who told me, at a conference on Afghanistan held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, in 1989:

I believe there to be populations of Hazaras in the border Muslim republics of the Soviet Union today. I also suspect Lutfi Temirkhanov to be of either Hazara origin, or from the Hazara inhabited region.

# Chapter 7

## The Hazaras in contemporary Afghanistan

*peel harchi mordani bash da shikamshi yak zannu auwa.*

An elephant however nearing death has ankle deep water in its stomach.

A Hazaragi proverb

The previous chapter dealt with the various Hazara communities formed outside the borders of Afghanistan. In this section we shall concentrate on Hazara society today inside Afghanistan. Very little has been written on the Hazaras in contemporary Afghanistan, either because the Hazaras are not taken seriously enough or are simply looked down on as an inconsequential minority.<sup>1</sup> My aim here is to examine Hazara society and its role in contemporary Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

The reorganization of Hazara society in contemporary Afghanistan was briefly mentioned at the end of Chapter 4, where it was suggested that the recent changes and general modernization of Afghanistan over the past several years have also encompassed Hazara society. These changes, while very slow in coming to fruition, especially with respect to the Hazaras where they have at times resulted in contradictory and even regressive changes, have nevertheless led to the emergence of a semi-conciliatory environment in which the Hazaras have been able to conduct their lives as more equal members of society in Afghanistan. Indeed, the Hazaras have even taken an active part in this process of modernization and reform, such as providing the largest volunteer work force for various industrial and reconstruction projects undertaken. The benefits that have filtered down to the Hazarajat and other Hazara-inhabited territory, however, have been minimal, leaving these regions still underdeveloped and the Hazaras still 'second class citizens'.

Hazara society in its contemporary form is the direct outcome of social changes that have taken place in Afghanistan since the

declaration of sovereignty in 1919 by Shah Amanullah (1919–29). Although not ruthless like his grandfather, Abdur Rahman, and apparently liberal, Amanullah was equally ethno-centric in his role. It was during his reign that the foundations of Afghan nationalism were laid, allowing the pursuit of Abdur Rahman's successful Afghanization of the country. At this stage Afghan nationalism consisted of a misguided attempt at changing Afghanistan from a 'tribal' society to a 'national' society. Misguided, because out of this original notion emerged the much more dangerous second phase of the process begun by Abdur Rahman, the Pashtunization of Afghanistan. During the following fifty-odd years between 1929–78, Pashtunist ethno-centric politics of Amanullah's successors, Nader Shah and Zahir Shah, Afghanistan's last king, were carried out in the most discriminatory and doctrinaire manner.<sup>3</sup>

The implications of this 'Afghan nationalism' for the Hazaras during this past century has been substantial economic, political, and cultural underdevelopment, engendering cruel social isolation and deprivation. The inevitable Hazara reaction and retaliation in the face of such discrimination has been opposition. This has meant that the carefully planned second phase of the Afghanization process has not been nearly as successful as was hoped by those involved, or as portrayed by such writers on Afghanistan as Kakar (1973) and Canfield (1973). Despite the enormous expense, and much terror and suppression caused by this process over the past decades, not one single Hazara has become 'Afghan'; on the contrary, the period has been witness to successive Hazara rebellions and uprisings in response. In particular, the events of the 1980s have revealed how wrong Kakar and Canfield have been in their assessment and analyses, for this period has seen the emergence of the Hazaras as active and strong participants in the socio-political life of contemporary Afghanistan, while the Pashtuns themselves have finally admitted the discriminatory and unjustified basis of Afghan nationalism.

Thus the situation of the Hazaras in contemporary Afghanistan must be studied in three separate phases: a) 1919–78, b) the 1980s, and c) the 1990s. This chapter will deal with phase one, while the following two phases will be covered in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively.

### **7.1 The Hazaras: 1919–78**

The social reforms brought about during the relatively more liberal reign of Shah Amnullah in the 1920s temporarily secured certain



rights for the Hazaras, recognizing, in theory, the Hazaras as equal citizens to all other nationalities and peoples of Afghanistan, at a time when their status had been reduced to slavery: '[Hazara] slavery was abolished in 1921 by decree and by the 1923 constitution' (Poullada, 1973: 71; Kakar, 1973: 9). In practical terms, however, these new-found rights and reforms proved short-lived and ineffective and the Hazaras were soon once again excluded from the development process of Afghanistan. There were two reasons for this. First, lying at the very heart of these reforms had been a somewhat contradictory form of nationalist ideology, which had entered Afghanistan politics from Iran and Turkey on the one hand, and Europe on the other. Indeed, the similar paths adopted by the three countries of Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan during the first few decades of this century resulted in the three countries being studied together as a group by scholars well into the 1950s.<sup>4</sup>

In Turkey, the Turkic language and 'Turkish' nationalism formed the basis for the establishment of this new country in the aftermath of the First World War, under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal Ataturk (father of the Turks). Similarly in Iran, Muhammad Riza Shah introduced and emphasized Iranian nationalism based on the Farsi language and ancient Iranian culture, which he dated back 2500 years to the ancient Persian Empire. During this same period, Afghanistan witnessed the emergence and enforcement of Afghan, or more correctly Pashtun, nationalism under the reign of the Muhammadzai family. Part of this new-found sense of nationalism was transforming the regional and colloquial language of Pashto into the national and official language of Afghanistan, in the place of Farsi:

The administration of Pashto courses, from now on, is carried out by the Ministry of Education. In Kabul alone, some 450 Pashto courses have been established; all government and other public officials are required to attend said courses in order to learn their national language. (Gharghasht, 1966: 44–5; also see Pstrusinska, 1990: 33)

Afghan or Pashtun nationalism was a very new idea, introduced into Afghanistan by Mahmud Tarzi, the leading figure among educated modernists in favour of a constitutional monarchy, with influence in the court of Amanullah. Mahmud Tarzi is said to have had a strong belief in the notion that Afghanistan must have its own unique language in order to preserve its independence and sovereignty, especially from its neighbour, Iran. In 1914 he wrote:

Now it becomes necessary to address ourselves, on the importance of our national language Pashto . . . Firstly, we should understand that every nation has a national language which gives it its life. A nation which loses its language also loses its life. The protection of the basic language of every country is as important as the protection of its life. We are called the Afghan Nation and our beloved homeland is called Afghanistan. We possess specific customs, ethics and a national language which we call Pashto. We must protect this language and attempt to develop and improve it. Every citizen of Afghanistan must learn this language even though they may not be a Pashto speaker, and our schools must make the teaching of this language their most important vocation.<sup>5</sup>

Farsi was and remains the historical language of the majority of the population of Afghanistan. However, because it was spoken in Tajikistan in the ex-Soviet Union and in Iran, the Muhammadzai rulers undertook, with the help of Mahmud Tarzi, to declare 'Pashto' the national language of Afghanistan:

It is the duty of the State to prepare and implement an effective programme for the development and strengthening of the national language, Pashtu. (Griffiths, 1967: 154)

Thus the *Pashto Tolana* (Pashto Academy), which had been established in the mid-1920s, two years after the independence of Afghanistan (Poullada, 1973: 73), set out to foster and encourage the re-writing of the history of the language and constructing new words and grammar for it.

This aim, which was by nature contradictory to the reforms introduced by King Amanullah, in time over-stepped the bounds of linguistic problems and created deep socio-political problems:

The country was divided into three groups: Pashto-provinces, both Dari [Farsi] and Pashto-speaking provinces, and Dari-speaking provinces. It was demanded that in the first group everything should function only in Pashto and this ideal should be achieved gradually in the mixed group. In the Dari group, communication in Pashto should be kept up . . . Many years of effort, however, have led the country to a kind of bilingualism. (Pstrusinska, 1990: 33, 36)

Consequently, not only did Pashto fail to replace Farsi among Farsi-speakers, but it also failed to establish itself as the language of many

Pashto-speakers, who had migrated to the cities, abandoning Pashto in favour of the more established Farsi as their language:

A considerable number of Pashtun nomads in western Afghanistan lost their native tongue and began to use Dari [Farsi]. One of the groups is the Nurzai from Adraskan. Another example of these Dari speaking Pashtun[s] are the Mohammadzai from Kabul and the Mohammadzai from Kandahar . . . Most Pashtu speakers living in urban areas learn Dari for practical reasons, business, education etc. and its role as *lingua franca*. (Pstrusinska, 1990: 30)

The lack of enthusiasm among the Pashtun population for the language of Pashto, along with the inability of Pashto to become the *lingua franca* of Afghanistan, forced policy makers to abandon their programme of implementation:

The Afghan royal family, in its self-identification with Pathans, declared Pashtu to be the official language of the Afghans [people of Afghanistan], although even the king did not speak it, and had to take lessons. All official business and teaching were ordered to change to it. The people of Kabul were unable to read street and bus signs. Few of the students and faculty in Kabul University understood Pashtu, and chaos resulted in the classrooms. The educational system was set back even more until that order was cancelled. (Hunter, 1959: 345)

The failure of the efforts to establish Pashto as the official language proved very costly to the development of Afghanistan. For not only did this process of Afghanization stunt the development of Farsi language and culture, along with those of the other peoples of Afghanistan, but it also proved an obstacle to the achievement of the unified political, economic and social development of the country.

The Hazaras, as Farsi speakers, were one of the peoples and cultures most suppressed during this period facing the systematic denial of their cultural identity and history. The suppression undergone by the Hazaras during 1929–78 has never been seriously studied either in Afghanistan or abroad, although certain aspects have at times been mentioned in passing as part of wider and more general discussions on the Hazaras, such as studies on their origins. Nevertheless, the events of these forty-nine years were no less

destructive and brutal than those experienced by the Hazaras during the much better documented events of the 1890s. These forty-nine years witnessed the continuous and systematic suppression of Hazaras at the hands of those in power and in charge of their development. I shall now look at various aspects of this suppression, with the aim of arriving at a more realistic and accurate understanding of what was happening to Hazara society during this period.

## 7.2 Political suppression of the Hazaras (1929–78)

The political suppression undergone by the Hazaras during this period was unprecedented and unsurpassed throughout the history of Afghanistan, except perhaps for the events of 1880–1901 under the reign of Abdur Rahman Khan. Throughout this period the Hazaras lived as a nation imprisoned at the hands of their Pashtun captors. The continuous and intolerable fear and deception suffered by them succeeded in breaking the Hazara spirit, and furthermore in convincing them that they were themselves to blame for the conditions in which they found themselves. Humiliation and intimidation of Hazaras were openly practiced, they were regarded as second-class citizens and were in practice, even if not officially and constitutionally, denied virtually all legal rights and protection. For example, during the premiership of Shah Mahmud (1946–51), one of Zaher Shah's uncles, in a skirmish that took place between Afghan nomads and Hazaras, one Hazara was killed and the foot of one of the nomads' camels was bruised. The court in Kabul set compensation to the relatives of the killed Hazara at 600 Afghanees, while the Kuchis were granted six times as much – 3,700 Afghanees – as compensation for the camel's bruised leg. According to the law, compensation for the life of a human being should have been set at 100 camels or 1000 *misqal* (1 *misqal* = 5 grams) of gold or 7000 *misqal* of silver (Talib, 1983: 29).

Similarly, the Hazaras were completely defenceless in the face of regular *Kuchi* (Pashtun nomad) encroachment on their lands, which were used by the nomads for grazing their animals; past experience had proven that the *Kuchis* were never prosecuted or chastised, for they enjoyed the support of the Kabul regime (ibid.: 28). Perhaps it is for this reason that the following expression has become quite common among Hazaras: '*sag-e Aughu kas dara, adam-e Azrah nah*' (even a Pashtun dog has a protector, but not a Hazara).



Insults, humiliation and the generally brutal treatment of the Hazaras was the accepted norm, again reflected in the daily language of the people of Afghanistan. The very term *Hazara* came in time to have universally accepted negative connotations. Hussain Nayel writes:

For many years the term *Hazara* became synonymous with fear and humiliation to the point where it could prove harmful to Hazara people. Thus in order to escape this humiliation and to prevent any potential harm many sought to hide their true identity, some even choosing to change their names; actions at once deeply painful and reflective of the shamefully feudal and segregationist regime of the time. (Nayel, 1985: 13-14)

Insults aimed at the Hazaras abound and are still current in Afghanistan. I shall give a few examples simply to demonstrate the brutal and far-reaching consequences of the kinds of discrimination promoted by Afghan nationalism. *Hazara-e moosh khor* (mouse-eating Hazara): this is an expression of contempt alluding to the poverty and supposed filthiness of the Hazaras, claiming that they are not above eating mice. This is particularly insulting since mice are considered *najis* or impure in Islam.

*Hazara wo chaklet* (Hazara and chocolate): since, even until the 1970s, the majority of servants in Kabul were Hazara, some of whom had been servants for generations, luxury goods, such as chocolate, were either unknown to them, or considered by others as 'too good' for them. Thus the above insult was aimed at those few Hazaras who had somehow managed, or were seen to be aiming, to make a better life for themselves, conveying more or less the same meaning as the English saying: 'he is getting too big for his boots', or 'he is getting above himself'.

*Hazara-e Khar-e Barkash* (load-carrying donkey): this is a perfect description of the social status of the Hazaras. Throughout Afghanistan it is the Hazaras who have the most menial and hardest jobs. For example, the name *Jowali* is often applied to them, for they work as construction workers and porters, using *Jowal*, the large sack used to carry huge amounts of weight around. Once filled, these *Jowal* weigh upwards of 20 Kabuli *sers* (1 *ser* = 7.5 kgs). The other occupation of the Hazaras is *Karachi Wani*, a type of porter. *Karachi* is a kind of two-wheeled pushcart, with car tires, drawn not by horses but by manpower. The *Karachi* is used especially for carrying



particularly heavy loads: anything up to about 1 tonne. Another current expression is: 'if there were no Hazaras, the price of donkeys would be very high'. This particular expression is quite probably one of the legacies of the reign of Abdur Rahman, reminiscent of his own words:

It is a saying in Afghanistan they would have to work like donkeys if it were not that the slaving donkeys of Hazaras do all the work for them. (Sultan, 1980: 277)

Among Hazaras from various regions, such as Behsud, Bamiyan, Jaghour and even Pakistan, a story is told that the bridge in Kabul, known today as *Pul-e Nadir Khan*, was previously called *Pol-e Yak Paisagi*, because during the 1890s, Hazara Mirs were sold at 1 *paisa* a head (100 *paisa* = 1 Kabuli rupee), and the money spent on building the bridge. This is but another anecdote, whether true or false is unimportant, which reflects the social and economic impoverishment of the Hazaras.

What is even more noteworthy and shocking with respect to the poverty and social status of the Hazaras, is the fact that during the years between 1890 and 1990, that is, exactly one century, virtually nothing changed. Compare the two following statements. The first was made by Sultan, court writer of *The Life of Abdur Rahman* in the 1890s:

All the hardest, dirtiest, and most menial work is done by the labouring classes of the Hazaras, and there is scarcely a house without its Hazara servant, in the form of slaves, stablemen, etc. (ibid.: 77)

The second statement was made by the late Dr Najibullah, Afghanistan's ex-president:

Throughout the past years [before the 1978 coup d'état] the most difficult and lowest paid jobs, poverty, illiteracy, social and nationalist discrimination were the lot of the Hazara people. (Gharjistan, 1987, Vol. 1, No. 1: 18-9)

Until the 1970s, the killing of Hazaras was declared by Sunni Pashtun clerics as an accepted and sanctified means of gaining God's favour and securing for oneself a place in Heaven. This declaration was taken to heart by many Sunni extremists. Perhaps the worst example of this during more recent years was the story of Latif Ghul, arrested in Kabul for the sexual assault and murder of some forty Hazaras in the

1960s. According to newspaper reports of the time, Latif Ghul, an ex-wrestler and a Sunni, would lure newly arrived Hazaras to the outskirts of Kabul with the promise of jobs, where he would tie them up, assault and then murder them. Once arrested, in his confession he named several mullas who had sanctified and blessed these murders, saying they had told him that with every Hazara he killed yet another of his sins would be absolved. The story of Latif Ghul shook Kabul, but while he was prosecuted, found guilty, and executed, no effort was made by the regime at the time to pursue and bring to justice those mullas, and doubtless many others, responsible for such tragedies.

While the above is a description of the situation faced by Hazaras in the cities, life in the Hazarajat itself was no easier, with no roads, schools, clinics, or other basic facilities. The only aspects of city life known here have been national service, *begari* or unpaid employment, and taxes.<sup>6</sup>

Tax collection has never been a just or orderly undertaking in Afghanistan. In the case of the Hazaras, it has furthermore never been consistent or fair, its unfairness all too often leading to open rebellion. One example took place during the premiership of Hashim Khan (1929–46), great uncle of Zahir Shah, when a special tax was introduced only for the Hazaras, called the *Roghan-Katta Pav*,<sup>7</sup> levied per head of animal in cooking oil. It is said that it was applied even to non-fat yielding animals such as horses and donkeys. By contrast, not only did the Afghan *Kuchis* pay no taxes, but they actually received allowances from the central government. Faced with such unfairness the Hazaras rebelled. In the winter of 1946, led by Ibrahim Beg, known as *Bacha-e Gawsavar*, the people of the Hazarajat captured the provincial government headquarters, executed several government officials, confiscated all their weapons, and armed themselves in preparation for a bigger battle. The regime in Kabul, however, prevented further bloodshed by repealing the new tax and generally pacifying the people (Yazdani, 1987: 19).

The aim of the new tax was to force the Hazaras to either sell or abandon their lands in order to provide land for the settlement of Pashtun *Kuchis* in the region. The idea was to force a reduction in the size of Hazara herds in order to, a) impoverish the Hazaras, and, b) to free Hazara grazing land for Pashtun *Kuchi* herdsmen. This view is further supported by Klaus Ferdinand who writes how, once losing their land, the Hazaras were forced to either stay on and work the land as labourers, or migrate to the cities:

For obvious reasons the nomads are generous with credit. As they told me: 'If a man wants to borrow 100 Afghani, we always give him 200.' This system is a vicious circle for the Hazara; as settlement of unredeemed debt the nomads take over sheep, cows, and in the last resort, land . . . And the result is that the nomads are, slowly but surely, in process of establishing themselves as a land-owning upper class, which each year returns to fetch its yield . . . The nomads are economically dominant and expanding. And this accords moreover with political dominance – the nomads are the stronger. The government has acquiesced in this situation . . . The Hazara themselves have been unable to do anything; they have been caught in a vicious circle, and submission, or flight to the cities, are – to put it very roughly – the only ends in sight for them. (1962: 130–34; 1963: 144–5)

Thus suppression and socio-political isolation were exercised on the Hazaras from above and below. On the one hand, the regime in Kabul, which was made up of representatives of the predominantly Pashtun tribes, discriminated against the Hazaras and deprived them of all rights, while on the other hand, the Pashtuns, especially the Pashtun Kuchis, endlessly plundered and assaulted Hazara people and property. From the 1930s to the 1970s, approximately one-third of the Pakistani Pashtuns were settled throughout Afghanistan, and nowhere in as large numbers as in Hazarajat (Haqshinas, 1984: 380).

The period also saw a campaign of assassination against leading Hazara and Shi'a figures, carried out under the order of Nadir Shah (1929–33). It is said of one of the Khans of the Solaiman Khil clan, Shahzad Khan, that he claimed that:

This year I had the time and opportunity to kill only one Hazara, Najaf Beg. For we have received orders by Nader Baba [Nadir Shah (1929–33)], to kill as many leading Hazaras as possible, so that their lands can be confiscated and distributed among us. (Talib, 1983: 29)

Below are the names of many leading Hazaras and Shi'as, who have over the years either been imprisoned for life, many dying while serving their sentences, or who have been murdered under false pretexts and not always very discreetly:

## *The Hazaras in contemporary Afghanistan*

Name	Position	Sentence	Date
Gholam Nabi Chappa Shakh	Socio-political leader	Death/executed	N/A*
Dr Barat Ali Taj	Economist	Life/died in prison	"
Sayed Ali Asghar Sho'a	Writer/scholar	"	"
Gholam Sarwar Joya	"	"	"
Akhond Mirza Hossain	Religious leader	Death/poisoned	"
Mulla Khodadad Loroka	Religious leader	Death/executed	"
Mihdi Khan Qizilbash	Socio-political leader	"	"
Fatih Mohammad Khan	"	Life/freed after 18 years	"
Allama S. M. Isma'il Balkhi	"	Life/freed after 14 years	1964
Sayed Ali Gauhar Ghurbandi	"	"	1964
Sayed Isma'il Lolinji	"	"	1964
Sons of Masjidi Khan Ghaznawi	"	"	1964
M. Aslam Sharifi Ghaznawi	"	"	1964
Abdul Latif Hirawi	"	"	1964
Mohammad Ibrahim (Gaw Sawar)	"	"	1964
Ayatullah S. M. Sarwar Va'iz	Religious leader	Freed after 4 years	"
Ayatullah Mohsini	"	Freed after 4 years	"
Hojjatul Islam S. Shah Abdul Azim	"	"	"

\*N/A= not available.

### 7.3 Socio-economic isolation

One of the most striking features of the history of Hazara society between the years 1929–78 is the degree to which they have been subject to the isolationist policies of successive regimes in Kabul, unprecedented with respect to the Hazaras or any other peoples in the history of Afghanistan. The direct result of this enforced isolation has been economic, social and cultural under-development for the Hazaras, and the loss of one of the most productive sources of agricultural produce for the whole of Afghanistan: 'The Hazaras . . . used to provide the whole of Afghanistan with meat and cooking oil' (Talib, 1983: 49). Despite this potential the Hazaras suffered a severe famine in 1970. While the famine also hit other provinces in north and central Afghanistan, it was Hazarajat that suffered the highest number of casualties:

When drought struck the remote and mountainous central Afghanistan of Hazarajat in the early 1970s, 50,000–100,000



people are thought to have starved to death because emergency supplies were never sent or were unable to get through. (Arney, 1988: 8)

Hussain Nayel writes on this intentional isolation of the Hazaras, discussed in detail in Chapter 5:

As a direct consequence of the policy of isolation of the Hazaras, in 1341 [1962] local governments throughout the Hazarajat were disbanded and instead annexed onto the neighbouring six *velayats* [provinces]. (Nayel, 1985: 14)

The aim of this isolationist policy was the destruction of an effective political and economic centre by a) denying the distribution of government funds to the province of Hazarajat, and, b) reducing the number of Hazara representatives elected to the *Majlis-e Shura-ye Milly* (National Council). These aims were successfully achieved. The Hazaras were deprived both of any substantial representation in the National Council and of any share in the development of the Hazarajat:

The government of this volatile mixture is firmly in the hands of the Pathans [Pashtuns]. In a cabinet of sixteen members, there are only two non-Pathans. You will find Pathan governors in most of the provinces, even where the population is predominantly of another ethnic group, but not – partly, it is true, because of the problem of the Pushtun language – a non-Pathan governor of Pathan province. The overwhelming majority of administrators are also Pathans. (Griffiths, 1967: 66)

Also:

But even provincial development is concentrated in the Pathan areas to the south and south-east of the Hindu Kush. The great schemes of agricultural development in Khost and the Hilmand Valley, of forestry at Alu Khel, of hydroelectric power and agricultural irrigation in Nangahar – these are all in Pathan provinces; and even where development is taking place in regions where other groups predominate, as with cotton ginning and processing in the north, at Kunduz and along the Oxus, it is often in an area with a Pathan settler population dating from the government's deliberate shifting of Pathans to these areas before the Second World War. (ibid.: 68)



While the problem was brought to the attention of the government by the very few Hazara representatives in government, no changes were made by the regime in its treatment of the Hazaras.<sup>8</sup> Among reports made to the government are the following, leaving no trace of doubt as to the conditions of life of the Hazaras, and of the government's knowledge of this. Woillet in 1971 wrote the following report to Afghanistan's Ministry of Planning:

furthermore, their [the Hazaras] isolation has kept them behind in the contemporary world . . . the central provinces have not at all benefited from government plans/aid, while such government aid is abundant in other areas and continues. The central provinces have received no serious government aid and co-operation for their economic development . . . Underdeveloped regions, such as the central provinces, require sustained and substantial aid and support from the government, in order to further develop themselves. (Woillet, 1971: 77, 84)

In the summer of 1970, three mobile clinics provided by the Medical Assistance Programme, a foreign aid organization, were temporarily dispatched to Hazarajat to gather general health data. The report of this team on Bamiyan is an excellent source of information with respect to health conditions throughout Hazarajat:

The death rate of babies among young mothers is 56 per cent . . . Death of babies peaks at one year of age, especially in large families where the period between pregnancies is short. The death rate among male babies is higher than among female babies . . . Major medical complaints were of intestinal parasites, bowel dysfunctions and genital problems . . . and malnutrition. Weakness observed among children is probably due to deficiency in calcium and calorie intake, for some of the protein consumed by children, instead of contributing to their growth, is broken down by the body to compensate for the lack of energy. The diet of the Hazaras consists of wheat or barley bread, buttermilk, tea and sugar. Grains, minerals, eggs, meat and cheese are to be found only rarely. Fruit and vegetables are found, though irregularly, during the summer months, not at all in winter. The most common vegetable consumed is onion. (Nayel, 1985: 71-2)

As mentioned, the isolation of the Hazaras has had the effect of keeping Hazara society deprived of any economic development and also deprived of the fruits of general modernization that has been

undertaken elsewhere in Afghanistan. Consequently, the Hazara economy has more or less retained its original and ancient form. Until 1978, much economic exchange was based on the barter system and currency was little used by the people; in fact currency had little meaning in Hazarajat. There certainly were no banks (nor are there any even today), rendering currency or money virtually useless. There was little contact with cities, no transportation or road network, or trading outside of the area.

they are almost literally inaccessible to all forms of central government or authority,. . . The extent of their isolation can be judged by the discovery only a few years ago of a large, beautiful and historically important minaret near Jam; and the traveller trying to reach it may still enquire in vain at a village less than ten miles away. (Ibid)

The province produced what it consumed, and vice versa. The miserable socio-economic conditions of the Hazarajat can be surmised from the following description:

to this day the economy of the Hazarajat is run on the basis of subsistence, under feudal conditions. Poverty has forced many Hazaras to live in [natural] caves and *samuchs* [man-made caves] . . . under constant threat and fear. Many more are reduced to sharing their living quarters with their animals, under which conditions they are subject to all forms of disease. (ibid.: 74)

#### 7.4 Cultural isolation

The social, political and economic suppression of the Hazaras was inevitably accompanied by cultural isolation. Perhaps the most adverse effect of this isolation culturally was in the educational sphere. Although conditions improved slightly during the first Republic (1973–78), when a few more schools were built in the Hazarajat (previous to this period only a handful of schools had existed), the general situation remained discriminatory. Simultaneously with this lack of attention to the education of the Hazaras, more and more schools were being built in Pashtun-inhabited regions of south-east Afghanistan, providing education for Pakistani Pashtuns as well as Afghanistani Pashtuns. In 1962, the University of Nangarhar was established in Jalalabad. In this university the language of instruction was Pashto and the educational facilities

were intended for the use of Pashto speakers only; furthermore it is interesting that the majority of its students were Pashtuns from the other side of the border, Pakistan, where they returned upon finishing their schooling. Also available to these Pakistani Pashtuns were scholarships awarded by foreign sources through the government of Afghanistan. The 1960s also saw the establishment of two secondary boarding schools in Kabul, *Rahman Baba* (named after Abdur Rahman Momandi, a Pashtun poet from Bahador village in Kohat in Pakistan), and the *Khoshhal Khan* (named after a Pashtun poet from Peshawar), financed by the government. Here again, no Hazaras were admitted, and most pupils at both schools were sent abroad upon graduation, either to Pakistan or the USSR to further their education. Meanwhile

throughout Hazarajat there were no such things as newspapers, magazines, etc. . . . and the people suffered from dreadful cultural impoverishment . . . there was even no talk of hospitals or schools. (Nayel, 1985: 75)

Clearly this discrepancy was neither incidental nor inevitable, but intentional:

meanwhile the Pashtun aristocracy continued to be educated in the West, while the bourgeoisie gained access to the local university. This modernization has strengthened Pashtun supremacy. (BM, 1982: 86)

The Hazaras, however, were able to overcome this educational handicap to some extent by retreating into their traditional culture and social structures, using these as tools in order to undermine the government. It is the belief of this writer that so long as a people has not lost its cultural roots, it can always reorganize and revitalize itself. So it was with the Hazaras, who had the good fortune of possessing a strong and rich culture and tradition, from which they drew the strength to face their defeat after 1890 and to survive under relentless suppression, to re-emerge and once again take an active part in the political life of Afghanistan over the decade 1980 to 1990.

This rich culture of the Hazaras, rooted in Islam, provided them with access to the traditional Islamic education system, known as the *madrasa*. Little known and somewhat misunderstood outside the Islamic world, this is a system of education based on the works and findings of Islamic scholars over the past fourteen centuries, and is one of the finest achievements of Islamic civilization. Contrary to what is

known of the *madrassa* system of education both in the West and among some in the Islamic world, these centres are not exclusively dedicated to the study of Islam and religious texts. It was in these very same centres that the great ancient Greek, Indian and Chinese texts were translated into Arabic and studied. The subjects studied in these centres range from philosophy to religion, from logic and literature to physics, chemistry, mathematics, medicine and physiology. It is from these centres that the universally accepted and respected scholars of the Islamic world have emerged; men such as Razi, Abu Ali Sina, Khayyam, Farabi, Ibn Arabi, Ibn Roshd, Ibn Khaldon, Ghazzali, Al Biruni and many others.

While the *madrassa* system suffered some decline for a period, it has regained popularity and respect during this century. Many such centres now exist in Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Syria, where thousands of students from all over the Islamic world are engaged in study. Similar centres also exist in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but these are less sophisticated and act more as preparatory schools from which students graduate and go on to centres elsewhere. These centres, through which the *madrassa* system operates, are called *hauza*, or *jami'a* (university) as it is known in Egypt, home of the world-famous 'University of Al-Azhar', built some ten centuries ago by the Fatimids of Egypt. Other *Hauzas* exist in Qom in Iran, Najaf in Iraq and *Zainabiyah* in Syria.

Throughout these schools in Iran, Iraq and Syria, students from Afghanistan have formed one of the largest groups, and of these more than 90 per cent are Hazara. So, while deprived of modern education, many Hazaras nevertheless, have managed to gain education of a very high standard elsewhere and have thus produced several scholars. These have in turn returned to their country and often played a significant role in the lives of their community. Below are the names of some of the better known:

Name	Subject	P/T*	Graduated	P/B*
Ayatullah M. Ali Modarriss	Arab Literature	Najaf/Qom	Najaf	Jaghouri
Mohammad Isma'il Moballigh	Islamic Studies	Kabul Univ.	Kabul	Behsud
Ayatullah S. Sarwar Va'iz	Islamic Theology	Kabul	Najaf	Behsud
Ayatullah Qorban Ali Mohaqqiq	Islamic Theology	Najaf/Kabul	Najaf	Turkman
Ayatullah Mir Hossain Sadiqi	Islamic Theology	Kabul	Qom	Turkman

Note: \* P/T = Place of teaching; \*P/B = Place of birth.

Two of these scholars are particularly outstanding: Ayatullah Modarress (1905–86) and Mohammad Ismail Moballigh (1936–79). Modarress held the chair in Arabic literature for some thirty years in the *hauzas* at Najaf and Qom until his death, a unique achievement. In the years 1975–86 alone, when he was teaching in Iran, he produced some 1500 audio tapes of his teachings, as well as a dozen important books and treatise, published in several editions in both Iraq and Iran (Jawadi, 1987: 43, 105, 122). This writer had the honour of studying Arabic literature and logic under the instruction of Modarress in Qom during the years 1975–77. Ayatullah Modarress died in Qom in 1986. Mohammad Isma'il Moballigh finished his studies in the Islamic schools of Kabul itself where he remained to teach. During the 1960s he was elected by the people of Behsud as their parliamentary representative, and continued teaching philosophy and literature at the University of Kabul until 1978. In 1979 he was executed by the new Kabul regime. He left many writings, journals and books; his most famous was his contribution to the *Aryana Encyclopaedia*.

Thus, not only have the Hazaras been successful in preserving their cultural identity and values, but they have also contributed to the development of Islamic scholarship and society in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the Hazaras form the largest community of Farsi speakers in Afghanistan and have contributed greatly to the preservation of Farsi language, literature and culture.

### 7.5 The Hazaras in Kabul (1929–78)

The only Hazaras to have benefited from modernization, albeit marginally, in Afghanistan since the 1960s have been city-dwellers, mainly in Kabul. During these years the population of Hazara migrants in Kabul was on the increase, because of the combined effects of harsh circumstances of life in Hazarajat, dual suppression at the hands of the government and Pashtun *Kuchis*, and the general lack of basic facilities such as hospitals and schools (Nayel, 1985: 73). Of the ever-increasing number of Hazara migrants in Kabul, a small section succeeded in taking advantage of the political changes of 1963 and to gain certain political and economic achievements. In 1963, for the first time, the post of prime minister was given to Dr Mohammad Yosuf a democratic and learned man who was not of the royal family. Previously, that position, like the crown, had been monopolized within the royal family. Also for the first time, in 1963, a new



## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

Constitution was drawn up declaring a Constitutional monarchy, opening the path to relative political freedom.

The very presence of a number of successful Hazaras in the economic, political and cultural life of the country clearly demonstrated that, given the opportunity, the Hazaras could play a constructive and determining role in the development of Afghanistan. The achievements of the Hazaras during this period can be divided into three areas: economic, political and cultural.

### *The economic sphere*

The Hazaras were able to ascend from the lowest paid workers doing the most menial jobs, to forming a Hazara 'middle class' in Kabul:

During the last 10 or 20 years, owing to education and commercial activity, an Hazara middle class has emerged. As a result the title of Khan [or Mir] has been unable to find a place within Afghan society or within the traditional society of Hazarajat. (BM, 1982: 86)

This Hazara middle class in Kabul is made up mostly of Turkman Hazaras, who have been commercially successful in two areas: as merchants, and as traders of spare parts for cars. Traditionally, second-hand European and American cars have been imported by Hazara merchants and sold at big auctions to Hazara traders, who in turn sell the spare parts in the markets of Kabul. For this reason, they are often called *Wairankar* (traders of car spare parts) in Kabul. Among famous Hazara merchants have been Haji Iskandar, Haji Abdul Hossain (*Rizah*), Haji Abdul Hussain (*Kalan*), Haji Nadir, Haji Saleh and Haji Qorban Ali. The Hazaras of Behsud usually engage in the trading of second-hand clothes, or own *nanwayes* (bakeries). The Hazaras of Ghazni and Jaghourri work in the civil service or the army. Even so, more than 80 per cent of the Hazaras of Kabul still hold the lowest-paid or most difficult jobs such as: *karachi wani*, *jawaligari* (portering), *mazduri* (servants), *kargari* and *bannaye* (construction workers), etc.

### *The political sphere*

Although the Hazaras have never enjoyed high-ranking or influential positions in the political life of Afghanistan, they did manage during the 1960s, to elect a handful of parliamentary representatives, and to

hold two government ministerial posts. However, even these individuals had little real power or say, and served more as token political figures. Among famous Hazara representatives on the National Council have been Haji Nadir, Haji Abdur Razzaq Taufiq (both from Turkman), Mohammad Isma'il Moballiqh, Shaikh Solaiman Yari (from Behsud), Qorban Ali Razawi, Abdul Hossain Maqsoodi (from Ghazni), Dr Abdul Wahid Sarabi (Minister of Planning) and Ya'qoob La'li (Minister of Public Works), the latter two from Ghazni (Poladi, 1989: 350, 391). As well as these, there have also been Hazaras in the Senate, senators Ali Akbar Narges (from Bamiyan) and Nadir Ali (from Jaghouri), although here again they have been relatively ineffective. In total, these Hazaras made up less than 1 per cent of the government officials as compared with the Pashtuns. Similarly, in the military there has been but one Hazara high-ranking official, General Ahmad Ali Khan 'Babah' (from Jaghouri) who retired in the 1970s, although, along with the Uzbaks and Tajiks, the Hazaras provide the largest number of ordinary soldiers.

The Hazaras of Kabul have engaged in more effective political activity outside the government and official political groupings. Up until the events of 1978, they had members in the PDPA, men such as Sultan Ali Kishtmand and Karim Misaq, and also in the New Democratic Movement (a Maoist group), two of whose founders, Akram Yari and Sadiq Yari were Jaghouri Hazaras. The majority of politically active Hazaras, however, were involved with religious movements, under the leadership of Shi'a intellectuals and mullas. These were mostly secondary school and university students involved in underground organizations, forming the movement known as the *Pasdaran-e Inqelabi-e Afghanistan*. Later, after the massacre of the leaders of this movement by the PDPA during the early 1980s, a new organization emerged under the name of *Sazman-e Mujahideen-e Mostaz'afeen-e Afghanistan*. Most of the Shi'a and Hazara political groups formed during the 1980s were led by either ex-members or sympathizers of this original student movement.<sup>9</sup>

### *The cultural sphere*

The Hazaras of Kabul were also able to gain certain cultural achievements. Although barred from attending universities and other centres of higher education, the Hazaras, by attending the Islamic schools mentioned earlier and taking advantage of the slight improvements made in the 1960s, were soon able to take up

professorships at the University of Kabul. Among these Hazaras were Dr A. W. Sarabi (Economics), M. I. Moballigh (Philosophy and Literature), M. Y. La'li (Engineering), Professor. A. S. Hassanyar (Ecology), and G. H. Naitaqi (Agriculture). Soon the Hazaras were also able to take part in the media: two of the publications produced by them were *Payam-e Wijdan* under the editorship of Abdur Ravof Turkmani, and *Borhan* under the editorship of Alam Shahi. It must be pointed out that these Hazaras were the sons of land-owning Hazaras who had moved to Kabul at the beginning of this century.

These slight achievements, however, were once again stopped with the 1978 coup d'état. Many leading Hazaras were either persecuted or forced to leave the country. While the Hazaras in Kabul continued to enjoy some limited opportunities, isolationist policies towards the Hazarajat were resumed. Since the former group had little power they proved unable to bring about any improvement in the conditions of their fellow Hazaras elsewhere. Power remained in the hands of the Pashtuns, while other ethnic groups, and especially the Hazaras, were marginalized. Eventually, the isolationist policies of the government resulted in the abolition of the name of Hazarajat and its disappearance from the map of Afghanistan altogether:

During the modernization of the Afghan state and its consequent administrative division, Hazarajat disappeared from the map of Afghanistan, as an autonomous province. Each Hazara region was attached to a *vilayat* (province) comprising non-Hazara ethnic groups. (BM, 1982: 85)



Plate 1 *Faiz Mohammad Katib*, the author of the *Sirajut Tawarikh*.





Plate 2 *Behind Tizak bazaar, Behsud*: Three Behsudi Hazaras cutting firewood. The collection of firewood at the beginning of autumn for the long winter month is one of the Hazaras main activities.

Photograph: S.A. Mousavi, 14/10/1989.



Plate 3 *Tizak, Behsud*: View from a modern *qala*. The modern *qala*, which houses a *khanawar* or *dudrau*, no longer includes a watch tower. Other changes include the position of windows looking outside the *qala*, and the use of glass in windows. *Qalas* are however still constructed on high ground next to a mountain.

Photograph: S.A. Mousavi, 14/10/1989.





Plate 4 *Kalu*, Bamiyan: Looking out of Karbala'i Hossain's *qala* towards Bamiyan. The view is Hazarajat arable land; on the left is the road to Bamiyan, and in the centre the *Kalu* river.

Photograph: S. A. Mousavi 2/11/1989





Plate 5a *Shash Pul, Bamiyan*: The land is raked and ploughed in the autumn and left to be irrigated by the melting winter snows, after which time young shoots will begin to emerge in mid-spring.



Plate 5b *Kalu, Bamiyan*: Karbala'ii Hossain's son at work ploughing the land. The photograph shows clearly the traditional method of ploughing used. The ploughman must be in a position where he has control of the animals.





ate 6 *General Ali Dost*: A Major (later General) of the 106th Hazara Pioneers, who joined Amanullah's government and became one of his closest allies and supporters. This is quite a rare photo of the General and was given to me by Mohammad Ali Gulzari, a Pakistani Hazara.





Plate 7 *Maryabad*, area of *Quetta* inhabited by the Hazaras.

Photographs: Sayed Fazil Hossain Mousavi, 1988.





Plate 8 *Yekaulang, Bamiyan*: Old man weaving a basket

Photograph: S.S. Kazimi, 1994.



Plate 9 *Yekaulang, Bamiyan*: Hazara women spinning wool.

Photograph: S.S. Kazimi, 1994.





## Chapter 8

# The Hazaras in the 1980s

*shisha ke maida shod, tiztar moosha.*

Broken glass becomes sharper.

A Hazaragi proverb

The active role played by the Hazaras in the national resistance movement between 1978–92 is at once unique and surprising, and more significantly, little recognized. This lack of recognition is due to the relationship of Hazara and Shi'a resistance groups with Iran, boycotted by the international community throughout the 1980s, coupled with the concentration of international attention to Afghanistan on the resistance groups based in Peshawar. After ninety-odd years of suppression and isolation even the Hazaras themselves could not have foreseen taking such a significant role in the national political development of Afghanistan. For example, the rather large body of folk literature produced over the decades speaks almost exclusively of the failure, pessimism and helplessness of the Hazaras with respect to the future. This is observed clearly in poems such as the one below:

*Ajab qauma ajab quama Hazara  
Ki ihsas-e khodi hargiz nadara  
Ba misle parai-e kauk tit parak shud  
Ba har jai-e ki uftad kad guazara.*

Translation:

Alas! what a strange nation the Hazara is  
Who do not have a sense of self-esteem  
Scattered like the feathers of a partridge  
And settled down wherever they found themselves.  
(Poladi: 101)

At the same time, the more formal literature by and on the Hazaras, of which there is very little, had concentrated mainly on providing justification for the general conditions which the Hazaras have for so long had to endure, its purpose being to portray and promote a certain compromise or symbiosis between the Hazaras and the ruling Pashtuns, with the former always as the weaker partner. Regardless, of this armed with their enduring rich culture and traditions, the Hazaras were able to transcend all pessimism and obstacles in order to re-emerge and revitalize themselves to take an active and determining part in the unfolding of events in Afghanistan during the 1980s. It is this resurgence and the recent changes that took place during the 1980s that I shall examine in the following pages.

### 8.1 Changes in Hazara social conditions: Kabul and other cities

As discussed in Chapter 7, the Hazaras were treated as second-class citizens in Kabul and Afghanistan's other cities. Since the coming to power of the *Parcham* faction of the PDPA in 1980 this situation changed somewhat. For example, for the first time in the last 250 years, Hazaras held the posts of Prime Minister and deputy Prime Minister,<sup>1</sup> as well as other minor government posts. In general, because of the PDPA's constitutional rejection of classifications such as 'tribe', 'language', and 'religion', the Hazaras were treated much more justly by the PDPA regime:

All citizens of the Republic of Afghanistan, man or woman, regardless of nationality, race, language, tribe, religion, political ideology, education, occupation, ancestry, wealth, social status, or place of residence, are viewed as equals, and entitled to equal legal rights according to the law. (The Constitution, Clause 36, 1987: 11)<sup>2</sup>

The Hazaras even succeeded in establishing their first independent publication, *Gharjistan*, in which they not only enjoyed the freedom to openly criticize the government, but were also able for the first time to discuss the inhuman discrimination they had suffered at the hands of the ruling Pashtuns for so long.<sup>3</sup> The most important improvement of all was the official recognition given to the Hazaras as a people with the same rights as Afghanistan's other ethnic groups. Consequently, they were able, in 1987, to form the first *Jirga-ye Sarasari-e Milliyat-e Hazara* (the Central Council of the Hazara People).<sup>4</sup> Before 1987, only the Pashtuns had been allowed to form a *Jirga*, a



representative body intended to attend to Pashtun tribal matters specifically. The Hazara *Jirga* was the first step in attempts by the PDPA to include the Hazaras in the socio-political life of Afghanistan. Of course, the motivation behind this momentous step was more party political than anything else, that is, it was a way of recruiting Hazara support for the PDPA government. For this reason those Hazaras involved with the *Jirga*, mostly Kabuli Hazaras, were accused of collaborating with the PDPA by their brethren. Nevertheless, in officially recognizing the Hazaras, the *Jirga* proved a significant development in the forthcoming activism of the Hazaras.

The presence of Hazaras in various other institutions was also quite noticeable, ranging from the university to the army. Quite apart from their political achievements, if the opportunities enjoyed by Hazara society continue in the coming years, this will have great implications in terms of its growth and evolution. Already as a result of the relative freedoms enjoyed during the 1980s, over twenty books and treatise and over 100 articles have been published on various aspects of Hazara society;<sup>5</sup> this is to be compared with the pre-1978 situation where there was rarely one book or treatise to be found in Afghanistan on the subject.

The Hazaras who remained in Kabul and other cities after 1978 and who co-operated with the PDPA regime belonged either to the already established urban Hazara middle class, or alternatively to the very poor and landless class who had taken refuge in the cities from the suppression of previous regimes. But the majority of Hazaras living in Kabul during the 1980s were forced into the cities out of economic necessity, or because of lack of security due to the internal fighting within Hazarajat since 1982. It is said that during the 1980s the Hazaras made up one half of the population of Kabul, as well as being the largest concentration of Hazaras in Afghanistan.

The single most significant element in the attraction to Kabul of the Hazaras was the more egalitarian treatment they received from the government. Kabul was not only regarded as a sanctuary from both poverty and fear, but also offered them a more just and non-discriminatory environment. In a speech given at the opening of the *Markaz-e Insijam-e Omur-e Milliyat-e Hazara* (Centre for the Coordination of Hazara National Affairs) in the summer of 1989, Sultan Ali Kishtmand, then Prime Minister and a Hazara himself, said the following in reference to this more egalitarian treatment of the Hazaras:

and this is our human and national duty. For the Hazaras have as a people suffered more oppression and violence than any other ethnic group over the past few decades. They have succeeded to survive in the face of natural and social obstacles, but have remained deprived of all their national and human rights . . . The story of their enslavement, oppression and torture began during the period 1880–90, at the hands of Abdur Rahman Khan . . . [Whereas] the Hazaras have over the years contributed greatly, and played a constructive role in the various social and economic areas of our country. While they themselves have remained deprived of everything, they have undertaken the hardest jobs in the public services, and the construction of our cities and roads . . . risking their health and their lives. (Gharjistan, 1989, No. 11: 119–23)

This realistic and rational approach by the government to the condition of the Hazaras not only drew many to Kabul, but also seriously influenced the position taken by the Shi'a and Hazara political groups based in Iran. In a brief conversation in Pakistan with Karim Khalili, spokesman for the Iran-based *Shura-ye I'tilaf* in 1989 (and currently leader of *Hizb-e Wahdat*, of which more in Chapter 9), I was told:

we are waiting for changes in social conditions in Afghanistan. The regime in Kabul has accepted virtually all our conditions. In our opinion, negotiations and political solution are the only key to resolving the current situation in Afghanistan.

The most significant government concession *vis-à-vis* the Hazaras was the acceptance of the possibility of their self-determination; a development not previously even dreamt of by the Hazaras. In the words of Sultan Ali Kishtmand:

The fundamental issue for the Hazaras has been their right to self-determination. The President of Afghanistan, the Honourable Najibullah, has formulated this issue in his speech, given on the first anniversary of the signing of the Geneva peace accords: in order to preserve peace and stability, and to protect the rights of our citizens, provisions shall be made for the establishment of local administrative offices enjoying extensive control, to the point of self-determination. (Gharjistan, 1989, No. 11: 126)

This constituted a turning point in the history of the Hazara people during the past one hundred years. There was of course a certain



element of suspicion on the part of the *Shura-ye I'tilaf* as to the sincerity of the government, forcing them to view these concessions as a political tactic, the proverbial 'olive branch'. This, however, is understandable in politics, and was clearly due to the lack of trust between both parties.

## **8.2 Changes in Hazara social conditions: Hazarajat and other Hazara territory**

While the majority of urban Hazaras saw it as in their interest to take advantage of the new opportunities offered by the reforms of the new regime, rural Hazaras took a different stand. Rejecting these reforms, they were able to take advantage of the breakdown of the old system and the instability of the new regime in order to renegotiate their position in Afghanistan society. The changes that took place in Hazara society outside of Kabul and other cities during the 1980s were fundamental and far-reaching. For anyone acquainted with the Hazarajat before and after 1978 these changes constituted a true social revolution, replacing the outlook, values and social contracts dominant in society with new norms.

These changes and developments came as a great surprise to the writer, who has long been acquainted with Hazara society. The level of political awareness among the Hazaras could be found in few other sections of society in Afghanistan. Inevitably, these developments were for the most part still social and political and needed yet to be translated into economic and administrative improvements. Nevertheless, they constituted a significant introduction to more permanent changes. While the changes in Kabul were from top to bottom, in Hazarajat they began at the bottom and moved upwards, providing a more durable base for fundamental and permanent improvements and development. Let us look at these developments in more detail.

## **8.3 The Hazara resistance movement (1978–90)**

The Hazara Resistance Movement, perhaps the most organized and successful resistance force against the invading Soviet army and the Kabul regime, must be studied in two separate phases. Phase one, which lasted some four years (1978–83), remains one of the best examples of successful popular resistance movement anywhere in the developing world. During this period, except for the centre of Bamiyan province, the entire Hazarajat and all other Hazara territory

throughout the Hindu Kush were liberated and brought under the organized control of the local Mujahideen forces. Throughout this period the whole of Hazarajat was under the control and leadership of one organization known as the *Shura-ye Ittifaq*, led by the religious leader, Behishti, and based, until mid-1982, at the strategically important Waras district of Yakau Lang (BM 1982: 87; Roy, 1986: 142–4).

Hazara resistance, which began in Dara-e Suf ten months after the coup d'état of April 1978 and had spread throughout the Hazarajat within three months, was most successful during this initial period of activity; by 1979 all Hazarajat, except central Bamiyan, had been retrieved from the control of Kabul (*Payam-e Mostaz'affin*, 1988, No. 69/70: 146–54). The reason for this rapid success was organization, unity in action, and a clear aim: the defence of the sovereignty of Afghanistan. In my travels through Jaghuri to Behsud in the autumn of 1981 I was myself witness to this remarkable success. This resistance was not restricted to Hazarajat alone. Throughout the years, Kabul was also witness to a certain amount of activity, the most effective of which were anti-government demonstrations. The Kabul demonstration of 3 August 1979 by the Hazaras and Shi'as has remained the bloodiest and largest faced by the PDPA during the 1980s.

Phase two, which lasted between 1983–89 was a period of intense internal fighting within Hazarajat. The main reason for this in-fighting was the emergence of Hazara groups backed by Iran. These groups, each of whom inevitably needed to consolidate its control, were forced into conflict with one another and with the *Shura-ye Ittifaq*. As a result, thousands of Hazaras were killed, and as many families forced to emigrate to Kabul or to Iran and Pakistan, not to mention the enormous physical destruction wrought on Hazarajat itself. The only achievement of the Hazara resistance during these years was the recapture of central Bamiyan; during the intervening years, resistance activity was for the most part restricted to holding the defensive against Kabul, and to internal fighting.<sup>6</sup> The writer visited Behsud and Baimyan in November 1989 and reported the extent of this destruction to UNESCO and UNOCA, warning, among other things, of the rapid destruction of ancient historic sites in Bamiyan (Mousavi, 1989: 5).

### *Phase One*

On the whole, between 1978–85 some fifty Shi'a and Hazara groups (see Appendix 4), big and small, were either formed in Iran, such as

the *Sazman-e Nasr*, or began a new phase of activism, such as *Sazman-e Mujahideen-e Mostaz'affin* (hereafter referred to as *Sazman-e Mujahideen*). Despite their multiplicity, all these groups had the same immediate objectives. They all wanted to participate in the resistance movement against the alien occupying Soviet force. Where they differed was in their chosen strategies in this movement, and in their long-term objectives. In their long-term objectives, the groups can roughly be divided into the pragmatists and idealists. Clearly, a detailed analysis of the nature and objectives of these groups is not within the scope of this study, but they can be briefly classified into three main categories.

The first category consisted of groups which had been active in Afghanistan since the 1960s. These were led by non-clerics and were followers of Ali Shari'ati's 'Islam without a clergy' thesis. Their followers were mostly educated, intellectual Shi'as. The most famous of these groups were: *Sazman-e Mojahideen*, *Kanoun-e Mohajir*, *Anjoman-e Daneshjouyan-e Mosalman*, *Gorouh-e Tauhidi-ye Qiyam-e Mostaz'affin*, and *Islam Maktab-e Tauhid*.

The second category consisted of groups led by progressive and politically active clerics, who had been active in Afghanistan since the 1970s, and were followers of Ayatullah Khomeini.<sup>7</sup> Nearly all the Hazara groups which were formed in Iran belonged to this category. In contrast to the groups in the first category, these groups were in favour of the establishment of the *vilayat-e faqih* (Principal of Jurisprudence) in Afghanistan, and so were under the direct influence of the regime and events in Iran. The last category consisted of groups led by traditional reactionary Shi'a clerics. These were not supported either by the non-clerical educated intellectuals nor the progressive clerics, and were viewed by them with great suspicion. *Harakat-e Islami* belonged to this category.

The emergence of such a large number of Hazara groups was interesting for two main reasons. First, this sudden increase in the number of political groups was a clear reflection and result of nearly one century of political suppression and isolation, and second, these groups were not formed on the basis of clan, tribal or regional identification, but on the basis of differing Islamic political ideologies. In 1981, for example, while travelling through Behsud to Pakistan, I spent some time in Sang-e Masha in Jaghuri (a district of Ghazni), where I met a group of armed Jaghuri Hazaras in charge of an independent military base, acting as representatives of the *Hizb-e Islami* (Hekmatyar), a Pashtun Sunni group competing with Shi'a

Hazara groups in the area. Eight years later I witnessed similar developments in Bamiyan. A group of Bamiyan's Shi'a Hazaras were co-operating openly with the *Jam'iyat Islami*, *Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami*, and the *Jabha-ye Nijat*, all Sunni groups, and the two latter also Pashtun.

The continuation of the occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet forces, changes in Iranian politics towards Afghanistan, coupled with the increasing lack of support for the activities of these groups by the Shi'a and Hazara community and the sheer multitude of the groups led to reorganizational changes. The hostility of the Iranian authorities towards groups belonging to the first and third categories forced these groups to leave Iran. For example, *Sazman-e Mujahideen* moved its base to Hazarajat, the *Tauhidi* group moved its base of activities to Quetta in Pakistan, *Harakat-e Islami* moved to Peshawar, and the *Shura-ye It'tilaf*, which had been based in Hazarajat, closed its representative offices in Iran.

The second category of groups, which was under the direct influence of Iran, was also put under pressure by their patrons to reduce their numbers. This was in part because Iran regarded the multiplicity of the groups as counterproductive, and in part because a single alliance of some sort would be much easier to control and influence. Consequently, many of the smaller groups, which were unable to resist this pressure were either disbanded or coalesced into one larger group.

Since the emergence of these groups in the 1980s, they have often been described as 'Iranian backed', and as a consequence dismissed and discredited. Although most of Afghanistan's Hazara and Shi'a groups during this period had, and some continue to have, close links with Iran, they were never 'Iranian' in the sense implied by many commentators, that is set up or even led by Iranian leaders. One example is Kakar, who writes: 'Khalili says of himself "I do not know what part of Afghanistan I am from; my father and grandfather would tell us we are from Ghazni. I was born in Iran"' (1995: 94). Another is Rubin, who says Abdul Ali Mazari, leader of *Hizb-e Wahdat* was 'an Iranian born leader of Afghan descent' (1995: 264); whereas in fact both Khalili and Mazari were born in Afghanistan, the former in Behsud, and the latter in Mazar-e Sharif. These inaccuracies, however, are not mere oversights on the part of these writers. They are yet another example of Afghan nationalism, taking advantage of every opportunity to reinforce Pashto culture and identity, and undermining Hazara identity (unfortunately writers such as Rubin simply perpetuate this).

*Phase Two*

In contrast to the first half of the 1980s, the second half of the decade saw the dissolution of groups. The focus of political debate in Shi'a and Hazara groups during this period became the need for a united front. This had three main reasons. First, was pressure by Iran to set aside factionalism and unite, in the same way as pressure was put by Pakistan and Western governments on the Sunni groups based in Peshawar to unite. Second, was pressure by the Hazaras themselves, who held the factionalist politics of these groups responsible for the internal fighting in Hazarajat. These internal conflicts had discredited the groups in the eyes of many Hazaras. Such pressure made itself evident in the demands and actions of the people: at the time of my visit to Bamiyan in November 1989, the *Shura-ye I'tilaf* was being put under much pressure by the local people to unite in order to strengthen its stand and to avoid internal conflicts. Indeed, on the road to Behsud and Bamiyan, local bases set up by different groups, rather than acting under their various names, had chosen the one single title of *Wahdat* (not to be confused with *Hizb-e Wahdat* which was later formed) .

Third, the groups themselves had come to recognize their ineffectiveness in domestic, regional and international negotiations over the future of Afghanistan. They had to confront the reality that they were not taken seriously and had fallen behind their Sunni counterparts in Pakistan. In the two Interim governments nominated and elected by the Peshawar-based groups in 1988, and later in 1989 in the aftermath of the withdrawal of Soviet forces, the Shi'a groups were given no say, nor were they allocated a single ministry out of the twenty-odd negotiated between the former groups (Daulatabadi, 1992: 277–86). As a result of the above three reasons, the Shi'a and Hazara groups came to the realization in the 1989 of the need to unite.

#### 8.4 Towards political unity

The importance of unity and solidarity among Afghanistan's Hazara and Shi'a communities was a lesson learnt painfully and at great cost in the aftermath of the failure of the Hazara uprisings of the 1890s. Among other factors, one of the most fateful causes of the uprisings had been the lack of organization and solidarity within Hazara society. The tragic outcome of the events of those years are still very



vividly present in the Hazara psyche and are passed down from generation to generation.

Although there was awareness of the need for solidarity among Hazara and Shi'a groups right from the earliest stages of the political activities of these groups from 1979 onwards, the first groups formed in the preceding period during the 1980s in Iran had not been as mindful of the bitter and tragic lesson of the uprisings. Formed mainly by Hazara and Shi'a refugees in Iran, and to some extent under the patronage, albeit somewhat enforced, of the Islamic Republic of Iran, these fledgling groups had begun their activism by holding meetings in Tehran and Qom on a regular basis. However, these groups were not to last long. A whole host of factors led to their demise, including: personal interests and conflicting group alliances, different interpretations of Islamic tenets and beliefs, organizational differences, differing degrees of dependence on the Iranian authorities, differences in strategy and tactics, and most important of all lack of sincerity and political experience. Efforts continued, nevertheless, during this period to unite the Hazara and Shi'a groups based in Iran.

The first Alliance formed in 1979, *Ittehad-e Ingelab-e Islami-ye Afghanistan*, covered five of the Hazara and Shi'a groups based in Iran, and had its own publication, *Azadi*. However, the publication only ran one issue, after which both it and the Alliance ceased to exist. One year later a new coalition was formed between the ten Shi'a and Hazara groups based in Iran called *Jabha-ye Azadi-bakhsh-e Ingelab-e Islami-ye Afghanistan*. They too had a publication, *Ashura*, which closed down after just a few issues, followed by the demise of the *Jabha* itself. A few years later, in late 1982, four of the smaller groups coalesced to form the *Jabha-ye Mottahid-e Ingelab-e Islami-ye Afghanistan* (Irfani, 1993: 23–9). In the pursuit of unity, this coalition of the four smaller groups was followed by another between them and the three larger Shi'a groups, and came to be known as the *I'tilaf-e Chaharganah* in 1984. This second wider coalition, however, did not last, but the *Jabha-ye Mottahid*, made up of the four smaller Shi'a groups remained active and united during the following six years (ibid., 1993: 29–30).

The first serious coalition of Hazara and Shi'a parties was eventually formed in 1987 by the eight groups based in Iran, in part as a result of pressure by Iranian authorities, and in part in response to the destructive infighting between the different groups inside Hazarajat. The coalition was named the *Shura-ye I'telaf-e Islami-ye Afghanistan*, and produced a constitution consisting of five clauses, 21

paragraphs and 12 subparagraphs. The coalition groups were: *Sazman-e Nasr*, *Pasdaran-e Jihad-e Islami*, *Nahzat-e Islami*, *Jabha-ye Mottahid-e Ingelab-e Islami*, *Harakat-e Islami*, *Hizb-e Da'wat-e Islami*, *Hizbullah* and *Sazman-e Niroo-ye Islami*.<sup>8</sup>

The significance of this coalition was its emphasis in its Constitution on the need for complete unity among the Shi'a groups. Because of its dependence on Iran, however, the Constitution also affirmed the legitimacy of the *velayat-e faqih* under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, and demanded the presence of his representative in the *Shura-ye I'tilaf* as chairman pending the election of a spokesman; that is the *Shura* was to be effectively controlled by the Iranian Islamic leadership. The *Shura* thus carried the name of Afghanistan, but was in essence to act as another arm of the Iranian leadership.<sup>9</sup>

Despite this, in so far as the *Shura's* Constitution acknowledged and dealt with the political and social realities in Afghanistan, and in particular in Hazarajat, it paved the way for the emergence of a more solid unity. Within two years *Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami* (hereafter referred to as *Hizb-e Wahdat*) was officially formed in Bamiyan, Central Afghanistan. *Hizb-e Wahdat*, which had emerged directly from the *Shura-ye I'tilaf*, nevertheless, had the distinction of being totally Afghanistani, in both control and objectives, and led by an Afghanistani Hazara and Shi'a leadership inside Afghanistan itself. The formation of *Hizb-e Wahdat* was the outcome of a year's negotiation and efforts by Hazara and Shi'a political and religious leaders in Hazarajat. Following initial talks between *Nasr* and *Pasdaran-e Jihad* in Panjau in 1988, known as the *Kongera-ye Panjau*, and several more meetings between the various groups in the ensuing year, leading to the *Kongera-ye Sarasary* of 1989 in Bamiyan, a twenty-clause Constitution was finally produced by a twenty-six-member team representing the six groups involved: *Sazman-e Nasr*, *Pasdaran-e Jihad-e Islami*, *Nahzat-e Islami*, *Jabha-ye Mottahid-e Ingelab-e Islami*, *Harakat-e Islami*, *Sazman-e Niroo-ye Islami*, and came to be known as *Misaq-e Wahdat* (Irfani, 1993, pp. 37–137).

This new Constitution was technically much simpler than that of the *Shura -ye Itifaq*, but proved much more successful in implementation. Although it still included the establishment of an Islamic regime on the basis of *velayat-e faqih* in clause 1, and carried the slogan of 'neither East nor West' in clause 14, the direct Iranian influence had been completely removed. For one thing Bamiyan was not Tehran or Qom and its Hazara and Shi'a inhabitants were out of reach of

Iranian authorities and influence. For another, Islamic Iran's policies and politics no longer inspired Afghanistan's Hazara and Shi'a population in the way that they had in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic Revolution; indeed many of Afghanistan's Hazara and Shi'a and leadership had become critical of Iran's policies *vis-à-vis* Afghanistan. The presence of clauses 1 and 14 can be attributed to the political pragmatism of the new coalition, which clearly recognized Iran as the staunchest supporter of Afghanistan's Shi'a population, while also appeasing the remaining supporters of the Iranian leadership within the coalition. The formation of *Hizb-e Wahdat* at this juncture, however, meant that for the first time Afghanistan's Hazara and Shi'a population was able to be present and act independently on a regional and international level, representing its demands and views coherently.

### 8.5 Hazara social transformation

What makes the examination of the Hazara resistance movement during the 1980s particularly significant is the accompanying transformation that took place in Hazara society. The effect of these changes on the traditions, culture and social structure of the Hazaras has been far-reaching. New terms such as: *Hizb* (party), *rahbari-e siyasi* (political leadership), *sazman* (organization), *goroh* (group), *tabaqah* (class), *milliyat* (nationality), *markaziyat* (centralism), *jang-e mosallahanah* (armed struggle) and many others became strongly established in the everyday language of the Hazara people, gradually replacing traditional tribal terms and structure. Membership in these new political organizations was not based on family, clan or tribal allegiances. It was common for members of the same family to not only belong to different groups, but even to fight one another. In Kalu, in Bamiyan, I was told by Karbalai Hossain, a Kalu Hazara: 'My brother and his entire family are followers of the *Harakat-e Islami*, but I am a *Nasri*; over the past few years we have fought one another several times.'

The role and meaning of *Mir*, *Arbab* and *Khan* too changed completely, though they still command special respect.<sup>10</sup> In practice, it was the leaders of local groups, and local commanders, who exercised true control. In many instances, the *Mir* was no more than a local commander. One of the interesting features of the Hazara uprisings, both during the 1890s (Temirkhanov, 1980: 163–4) and the 1980s, was that while fighting against the government in Kabul, the Hazaras

simultaneously took a stand against the *Mirs* and *Arbabs* in their own localities. During the period from 1978 to 1985, *Shura-ye Ittifaq*, which represented the Hazara *Arbabs*, was repeatedly criticized and opposed by the groups based in Iran for its feudal ideology. The exceptions to these changes were the Isma'ili Hazaras, who supported both the government and the resistance. Isma'ili leaders still rule in accordance with tradition, so that little apparent social change has taken place among this group of Hazaras.

The other evident major achievement of the Hazaras during the 1980s was the retrieval of Hazara lands confiscated from them by force by the Pashtuns during the previous decades. I was told in Bamiyan that there was not a single Pashtun left in the whole of Hazarajat. Deprived of central government backing, and given the bitter past relations between the two peoples, the Pashtuns have themselves withdrawn from Hazarajat. Elsewhere, armed confrontation in Ghazni between the Hazaras and the Pashtuns eventually forced the latter to withdraw, an outcome previously inconceivable for the Hazaras, because of their bitter anti-Kuchi sentiments.<sup>11</sup>

Developments also took place on the cultural front. Primary schools were built in most Hazara regions by the local groups with the co-operation and support of the local people. The curriculum taught in schools varied, depending on the group in control in the area. Some groups, such as the *Nahzat-e Islami* used textbooks from Iran, while in Bamiyan textbooks from Kabul were used, with the exception of history books, because of their obvious bias. An even more remarkable development was the introduction of libraries, fixed and mobile, created by each group for its followers. The books, all in Farsi, were mostly on social, political, historical and literary subjects. Photocopies of publications and journals were also to be found throughout Hazarajat. One example was the publication *Payam-e Moqavimat*,<sup>12</sup> far superior in terms of quality of content compared with publications produced by groups outside of Afghanistan.

Great improvements were also made in road construction throughout the Hazarajat. Where previously there were virtually no roads, they can now be found between most major centres of the Hazarajat, used to transport both people and goods. These roads were also inevitably effective in the transportation and distribution of news and ideas, a further development doubtless instrumental in the ideological evolution of Hazara society.

Although traditional tools and methods of agriculture and production are still used in the Hazarajat, certain changes have taken

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place here too, such as in the choice of seeds cultivated for sale in the markets. For example, by 1989, Bamiyan produced enough potatoes to supply Kabul as well as other parts of Hazarajat, following the introduction of twelve new varieties of potatoes. The same is also true for several other vegetables. The marketplace in Bamiyan itself grew threefold in the 1980s, providing for nearly all local demands. However, the economy of the Hazarajat remained poor and ranked lowest throughout Afghanistan.



## Chapter 9

# The Hazars in the 1990s

*dir ayah, dorost ayah.*

Latter may be better.

A Hazaragi proverb

Developments in Hazara society during the 1990s are fascinating both from the point of view of the extent and direction of change. This short span of time has seen a rapid increase in political, social, and cultural awareness by the Hazaras of their own society, as the direct outcome of their active presence in the resistance war of the 1980s. This awareness has, in turn, guided the development of the desire for a sense of ethnic identity, self-determination, and social justice as the primary objectives of the Hazaras. The rapid political maturity of the period has seen Hazara society move towards unity (between both Sunni and Shi'a Hazaras) and solidarity as primary social and political objectives. This has, in turn, meant the replacement of inter-ethnic conflicts among the Hazaras by a struggle for national recognition, and participation, for the first time, in the country's political life.

A people who had never throughout their history succeeded in organizing themselves under a single leader or into a centralised political entity came together, incredibly and unpredictably, under one leader and in one party during the 1990s. It can be said, without doubt, that the last twenty years have been of exceptional significance in the entire history of the Hazaras, and that of these twenty years the first half of the 1990s were the most determining and fateful ever, particularly the years between 1992–95. Here I shall look at developments in Hazara society during the 1990s in two phases. Phase one will cover the first half of the 1990s, and phase two the period since 1995.

### 9.1 Phase one (1990–95)

The politically turbulent period of the 1980s, examined in the previous chapter, blossomed into a more determining period for the Hazaras in the 1990s, bringing them social and political maturity. The first half of the 1990s saw the achievement of true unity and solidarity within the Hazara and Shi'a community in Afghanistan, whereas during the 1980s, despite much rhetoric, what was achieved was the somewhat fragile coalition of the numerous Hazara and Shi'a political parties. While unity was considered necessary to fight the alien invading power and for jihad against the PDPA during the 1980s, the primary aim of Hazara activism during the 1990s became the securing of social justice and political participation for their people within national politics:

We have three demands: one is the formal recognition of our religion. Secondly, the previous administration of the country was oppressive and must change. Thirdly, the Shi'as [and Hazaras] must participate in the decision-making process.<sup>1</sup>

Social justice and the right to political participation are, of course, the demands of other political parties in Afghanistan, both religious and non-religious. But for no other group do these demands hold the same vital significance. Social justice for the Hazaras would mean the end of a century of ethnic, linguistic and religious discrimination, while the right to political participation would allow the restoration of their social, political and cultural identity within Afghanistan society. While Afghanistan's other ethnic groups may suffer from one or two types of discrimination, no other group has suffered the three-pronged assault suffered by the Hazara and Shi'a population nationally. As such, calls for social justice and political participation are not mere political slogans or demands for the Hazaras and Shi'as, but a fight for their very survival as a community and distinct group:

We are not in favour of war . . . but we demand our rights. We will negotiate with anyone willing to grant us our legitimate right to participate in the country's decision-making process as a quarter of the population.<sup>2</sup>

Three main changes led to the rapid development of Hazara society during the first half of the 1990s. The first was the achievement of solidarity between urban and rural Hazaras. Although by the late 1980s a large degree of unity had been achieved by rural Hazaras, it

was the events of the early 1990s, in particular their unified resistance in West Kabul between 1992–95, which brought rural and urban Hazara communities together in solidarity. This achievement enabled the Hazaras to take their place as a national political force. The second change was the emergence of the Shi'a and Hazara community from political and economic isolation along with the concomitant establishment of contact and relations with neighbouring countries and other sympathizers abroad. The third, and most important, change was the simultaneous presence, for the very first time in Hazara society, of three vital factors: the right social conditions, a solid leadership, and political organization.

The 1970s had seen the development and emergence of socio-political awareness among the Hazaras. During the 1980s these developments had intensified and come to the attention of the international community and media. The 1990s saw the active participation of the Hazaras and Shi'as in Afghanistan's political life. Thus, the study of social developments in Hazara society during the first half of the 1990s is the study of these changes, and in particular the last, namely, the presence of social conditions, leadership and political organization.

### *Social conditions*

There were two reasons why social conditions had never before been predisposed and receptive to the emergence and presence of the Hazaras as a social force. The first was the traditionally tribal structure of politics in Afghanistan. The survival of the traditional Pashtun leadership had required the suppression of other ethnic groups, in particular the Hazaras. In previous chapters I have dealt at length with the policies and reasons of successive Pashtun leaders in isolating the Hazaras. Until 1978, the general socio-political structure of Afghanistan precluded any possibility for the Hazara community to emerge from this isolation. The breakdown of this structure in 1978, however, signalled the emergence of a new social structure, which, in turn, allowed some room for manoeuvre for all, including the Hazaras.

The second factor responsible for change in Hazara community were conditions within Hazara society itself. Political suppression, economic backwardness, the breaking down of traditional Hazara social structures, successive defeats and brutal oppression had left the Hazaras despondent towards, and mistrustful of, social changes

taking place elsewhere in Afghanistan society. In addition, conflict within Hazara society, exacerbated by Pashtun interference, left every observer of Hazara society pessimistic about the chances for change and development. The events of 1978 also marked the end of 231 years of Pashtun dominance and the start of a new era in Afghanistan. Oppression by, and fear of, central government were replaced by hope and confidence. This turbulent historic turning point and the concomitant power vacuum at the centre signalled the end of Pashtun domination over the Hazarajat.

The period following 1978 was witness to exceptional and fundamental changes regionally and internationally too. Western governments, who had never before taken any real interest in Afghanistan, were forced by events to take an active part in the country's affairs.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran brought its own influences to bear on the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The majority of Hazaras are Shi'a and have a particular religious and cultural affinity with Iran. The Islamic Revolution of Iran was regarded as a source of inspiration and strength for many groups in Afghanistan, but in particular for the Hazaras. By taking advantage of this development, Hazara society propelled itself into what can be called a period of social transition, during which it gained much political experience and preparedness. By the 1990s, Hazara society was well prepared for, and predisposed to, the emergence and acceptance of a unified leadership. Urban and rural Hazaras had come together under a unified banner and set of demands, propelling Hazara society out of a century of oblivion and isolation. By 1992 the Hazaras had emerged as a national force to be reckoned with. The transition had been completed, and the Hazara and Shi'a populations turned away from *taqiya* (dissimulation or quietism) to social protest and activism.<sup>4</sup>

### *Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami*

Readiness to act and a unified leadership, although necessary, are not sufficient conditions for the success of social mobilization. Also necessary are appropriate organizational skills and facilities capable of mobilizing social forces towards a unified strategy; successive failures by the Hazaras during the previous one hundred years had taught the Hazaras this lesson. Thus, to guarantee their success, the Hazara leadership needed to organize the people in order to successfully execute its tactics, and to relay these experiences to

Hazara society at large. The bitter experiences of the 1980s had eventually led, among other developments, to the establishment of a unified and organized political leadership in Hazara society, in the form of *Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami*. From this point onwards the focus of socio-political developments in Hazara society during the 1990s became *Hizb-e Wahdat*.

Following its formation in 1989, *Hizb-e Wahdat* made rapid progress inside Afghanistan. Within the next three years it succeeded in bringing under its control and unified leadership almost the whole of Central Afghanistan, as well as the country's other Hazara and Shi'a inhabited areas, restoring peace and security, the population's main concerns, in these areas. During this period, *Shura-ye Itifaq's* constituent groups officially dissolved themselves, allowing *Hizb-e Wahdat* to gain credibility and influence throughout Afghanistan's Hazara and Shi'a inhabited areas, as well as regionally and internationally.<sup>5</sup> They were able, in 1991, to participate for the first time in international gatherings on Afghanistan, such as the Conference of Islamic Foreign Ministers in Istanbul, the Four-partite Conference held first in Islamabad and then in Tehran, the Sixth Conference of the OIC in Senegal, the UN annual meeting, and to hold official talks with the UN General-Secretary in New York. Most important of all, *Hizb-e Wahdat* was officially invited to take part in discussions alongside the seven groups based in Peshawar, and to hold talks with the Soviet Deputy President and Foreign Minister in Moscow. In addition to its presence in international fora, *Hizb-e Wahdat* opened representative offices in several European countries, and organized seminars for the review of Afghanistan's political problems. In August 1991, *Hizb-e Wahdat* held its first annual congress in Bamiyan, celebrating its rapid success and development.

By 1992, the majority of the remaining Hazara and Shi'a groups outside *Hizb-e Wahdat* also dissolved themselves and joined forces with it. Some remained outside the Party: *Harekat-e Islami*, *Hizbullah* and *Sazman-e Mujahideen*, all of whom were undecided about their acceptance of the principles of the Constitution, and sought to enforce certain changes in it. The downfall of Najibullah's government in 1992, however, brought to the fore *Hizb-e Wahdat* as one of the country's three main political forces in the context of Afghanistan's rapidly changing political composition. This precipitated the resolution of indecision on the part of the *Sazman-e Mujahideen* and *Hizbullah*, who joined the Party, and the defection of many *Harekat-e*



*Islami* members to *Hizb-e Wahdat*. Thus, *Hizb-e Wahdat* became not just the largest and most influential Hazara and Shi'a party in Afghanistan, but one of the country's most influential political forces, with a regional and international presence.<sup>6</sup>

### *Leadership*

Leadership in Hazara society, both before the 1890s uprisings and in their aftermath has taken three dimensions: ethnic, religious and political.

#### *Ethnic leadership*

The Hazara population is composed of several small and large clans. Each clan is led by its elder, often known as the *Mir* or *Beg*. Until the 1890s, such leaders enjoyed tremendous influence (see Chapter 3). After the 1890s, ethnic leaders lost some of their traditional influence and acted instead as representatives of the Kabul government, and were often referred to as *Arbab*, *Malek* or *Khan*. During the resistance years (1978–92), although the traditional influence of ethnic leaders was restored to some extent, this soon gave way to the influence of newly emerging religious-political leaders and political parties. The traditional leadership still enjoys some powers within internal issues, such as marriage and commerce.

#### *Religious leadership*

Although the religious leadership in Hazara society was much undermined following the defeat of the 1890s uprisings, several reasons have contributed since then to the restoration of its power and influence. First, religion is even more powerful than ethnic loyalties. Shi'ism, practised also by the Qizilbash, Sayyeds, some Tajiks and Pashtuns, as well as the Hazaras, was able to resist the continuous discrimination against it in the aftermath of the 1890s uprisings and to regain its influence. Solidarity between these different ethnic groups on the basis of their religious beliefs has been a very significant factor in restoring the power of the religious leadership.

Second, also significant has been the relationship between the Shi'as of Afghanistan and their brethren abroad, in Iran, Iraq and Syria. Because the majority of Hazaras are *Dovazdah Imami* Shi'as, this contact with the outside has considerably strengthened the

religious leadership in Hazara society over and above any other section of Hazara society. The final reason for the reinstatement of the religious leadership is the support of Islam in Afghanistan by Western powers in the war of resistance against the Soviet Union. This support had a twofold effect on the role of religious leadership in Afghanistan. On the one hand, the emphasis on Islam in opposition to Communism helped minimise and somewhat dilute religious differences and discrimination against the Shi'as. At the same time, it had the effect of strengthening religious leaders in general, allowing them to effectively monopolise leadership within Hazara and Shi'a society.

In addition, during this period, there emerged from within Afghanistan's Shi'a community holders of the highest religious positions in Shi'ism: *marja'i taqlid* (Source of Imitation) and Ayatollah. Ayatollah Qorban Ali Mohaqqiq was the first Afghanistani Hazara Shi'a to attain the position of Source of Imitation. A Turkman Hazara from Parwan Province, Ayatollah Mohaqqiq spent many years studying in Najaf and later took active part in the *jihad* of the 1980s.<sup>7</sup>

### *Political leadership*

Political leadership in its modern form is a very new phenomenon in Hazara society, going back only to the period after 1978. Political organization and parties too, by implication, are new phenomena. In many ways it is this newness which makes the study of political leadership in Hazara society particularly interesting.

As mentioned before, the 1980s were a period of transition from traditional leadership to modern forms of leadership. Although very dependant on the religious leadership, secular leaders have played their part in recent Hazara politics too, in particular in the military, organizational, and cultural dimensions. But it was in the early 1990s that the Hazara political leadership made its mark and its presence felt nationally, in coming together to form *Hizb-e Wahdat*, under the leadership of Abdul Ali Mazari. Under his leadership *Hizb-e Wahdat* became the strongest political party representing Afghanistan's Hazara and Shi'a population.

Born in 1946 in a poor farming Hazara family in the Nanwayee village in Charkent, in Mazar-e Sharif Province, Abdul Ali Mazari left for Najaf and Qom to complete his religious studies after completing his primary education in his home province. In Qom he came across and developed the progressive convictions which took him back to

Charkent in 1978 to lead the first ever rebellion against the PDPA government in Afghanistan, and kept him fighting for justice until the end of his rather short life. Mazari was the first political leader to speak up for and on behalf of a unified Hazara and Shi'a political party, putting their case to the UN and the international community. He achieved an unprecedented degree of popularity among the Hazara and Shi'a community, which called him *babah* (father). After his death his body was carried by the people all the way from Ghazni to Bamiyan on foot.<sup>8</sup>

Mazari's most significant achievement was in bringing together in his person and in a modern organization all three strands of leadership: ethnic, religious and political. After many years of struggle against suspicion and mistrust, Mazari succeeded to bring together the many sections, forces and classes within Hazara and Shi'a society, and to represent a unified people nationally, regionally and internationally. Thus, it can be said, that the process started by Mir Yazdan Baksh 150 years ago to unite the Hazara and Shi'a community under a unified leadership was realized 150 years later by Mazari. Indeed, many similarities exist between Mir Yazdan Baksh and Mazari. Both men believed passionately in the need for unity in the Hazara and Shi'a population; both lived in times of active struggle between the Tajiks, Uzbeks, Pashtuns and Hazaras. While Mir Yazdan Baksh witnessed the first war against the British, Mazari lived through the war of resistance against the Soviets. Even their deaths bore uncanny resemblance. Mir Yazdan Baksh too was betrayed: he had been invited by Haji Khan Kakar, who had sworn on the Quran to keep his word. Once at Haji Khan's camp though Mir Yazdan Bakhsh was captured and later killed in the most brutal manner. His death marked the end of any hope for Hazara unity for 150 years, and the start of bitter Hazara-Pashtun enmity. Mazari too had signed an agreement with the Taliban leadership soon after their emergence on the political scene in Afghanistan in 1993, but a few days later was captured and met a similar brutal fate to Mir Yazdan Bakhsh. His death in the spring of 1995 also marked the end of a fateful phase in Hazara political development and history.

## 9.2 Resistance of West Kabul: 1992–95

West Kabul consists of areas of the city to the west of the Shir-Darwaza, Asmayee, Kafir and Afshar mountains, which split Kabul down the middle into two main areas to the northeast and the

southwest. Although the Hazaras had come to inhabit most parts of Kabul by 1992, having originally settled in the Chindawol and Moradkhani areas to the north of the city, West Kabul housed by far the largest concentration of the city's Shi'as and Hazaras. According to some estimates, the Hazaras made up one half of Kabul's entire population at the time of Najibullah's downfall (around 3 million), the largest concentration of Hazaras anywhere in the country. For this reason, in the aftermath of seizure of power by the Mujahideen, more than half of Kabul was in the hands of the Hazaras.

At this stage, *Hizb-e Wahdat* leadership was not yet based in Kabul, although active party cells had been present in the city for some time.<sup>9</sup> Once in Kabul, *Hizb-e Wahdat* found itself unwillingly involved in consecutive battles against the forces of the Interim Government, to safeguard its control over its sections of the city and to protect West Kabul's Hazara and Shi'a civilian population. Between May 1992 and March 1995, West Kabul was the scene of twenty-seven battles in all, making this part of Kabul the country's main battle field.

The combination of the right social conditions, political party and a unified leadership brought about for the Hazaras once again in 1992 the possibility of standing up to the regime in Kabul for their ethnic and religious rights on the one hand, and for their share in the nation's decision-making process, on the other hand. The reason behind *Hizb-e Wahdat*'s opposition to the Mujahideen Interim Government was that it had been excluded from it. The Interim Government plan had been drawn up in Peshawar by the Mujahideen groups based there and led by Sayyaf. Not only had *Hizb-e Wahdat* not been present in the decision-making process, the plan had completely ignored the fate of the Shi'a and Hazara population, in effect denying their very existence in Afghanistan. The battles were thus between the various factions of the Interim Government on the one hand, and *Hizb-e Wahdat* on the other. Thus, West Kabul's inhabitants found themselves bombarded aerially from all directions, and engaged in ground battles also from different directions. The struggle put up by the *Hizb-e Wahdat* and its forces for the defence of the rights of the Hazara and Shi'a community came to be known as the 'resistance of West Kabul'.

This resistance, which began in May 1992 and ended in defeat in March 1995, marked a turning point in the contemporary history of Afghanistan in general, and in the fate of Afghanistan's Shi'a and Hazara populations in particular. By resiliently defending and holding on to its positions for the intervening three years, *Hizb-e Wahdat*



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brought the struggle of the Hazaras to the attention of regional and international powers. Furthermore, despite their defeat in Kabul, they had become one of faction-ridden Afghanistan's four main political forces.

The resistance of West Kabul shared similarities with the 1890s uprisings. In both cases, Sunni-Shi'a conflicts were used as a means of oppressing the Hazaras; and in both cases the Hazaras were eventually defeated. However, the two movements were essentially different from one another. The resistance of West Kabul differed from the 1890s uprisings in its location, its timing, its method of action, and its clarity of demands and objectives. The 1890s uprisings had taken place throughout Hazarajat. Furthermore, they had been disorganized and random, lacked unified leadership, political or military organization, and contact with the outside; with changing demands. The 1890s uprisings had been basically a rural rebellion against the ruling Pashtun regime. The resistance of West Kabul, on the other hand, was centred in the country's capital, enjoyed a unified leadership backed by an organized political party; had extensive contact with the outside world, where it had effective representation, and had specific short-term and long-term objectives and demands. In short, the resistance of West Kabul, which began exactly one century after the end of the 1890s uprisings, was an organized urban resistance movement, and this time in opposition to a Tajik-dominated regime.

### *The Afshar massacre*

One of the civil war's most horrific moments occurred on 11 February 1993, in the Afshar district of West Kabul, where hundreds of its Hazara residents were massacred by government forces, under the direct order of President Rabbani and his chief commander, Massoud. The Afshar district lies at the foot of the Afshar mountains and covers a wide area in West Kabul. The district is also the site of Kabul Polytechnic and the Institute of Social Sciences, chosen by the *Hizb-e Wahdat* leadership as its headquarters upon its arrival in the city, because of its perceived shielded position between the Kafir and Afshar mountains. At one o'clock on the morning of 11 February, while the inhabitants of Afshar lay asleep in their beds, the Institute of Social Sciences was attacked from three sides: from the west by Sayyaf's *Ittehad-e Islami* forces, and from the north and south, by Rabbani's forces, helped by traitors from within the Party, who had



already been bought off. Faced with such an offensive, *Hizb-e Wahdat* retreated from its positions in the district. Following this withdrawal, forces loyal to Sayyaf and Ahmad Shah Massoud raided the area. For the next twenty-four hours they killed, raped, set fire to homes, and took young boys and girls as captives. By the time the news was broadcast in Kabul and internationally the following day, some 700 people were estimated to have been killed or to have disappeared. One year later, when parts of the district were retaken by *Hizb-e Wahdat* forces, several mass graves were unearthed containing a further fifty-eight bodies.<sup>10</sup>

The massacre was condemned by regional neighbours and international human rights organizations. However, its perpetrators were never caught or brought to justice. Although, Rabbani's government did condemn the massacre as one of his government's 'mistakes', the tragedy was blamed on his soldiers, who like soldiers everywhere are never held responsible for such war crimes. Today, Afshar remains a ghost district, its surviving inhabitants having fled in the aftermath of the massacre. Its legacy, however, remains very much in the hearts and minds of the Shi'a and Hazara population, further fuelling ethno-religious conflict.

The massacre had a further outcome. It brought together in alliance *Hizb-e Wahdat* and the Pashtun *Hizb-e Islami*, against their common enemy, the ruling Tajiks. The Hazaras found themselves faced with a totally new socio-political set of dynamics, calling for a revised socio-political analysis of Hazara-Pashtun relations.<sup>11</sup> Up until this point, the Hazaras had considered the Pashtuns their foremost oppressors. In the aftermath of the Afshar massacre Hazara relations changed with both their historical enemy, the Pashtuns, and with the other ethnic groups, such as the Tajiks. The result was a new four-party alliance between *Hizb-e Wahdat*, Hekmatyar's *Hizb-e Islami*, Dostom's *Jonbesh-e Melli-Islami*, and Mujaddidi's *Jabha-ye Nijat-e Melli*. In other words, the Hazaras, Pashtuns and Uzbeks were allied against the Tajiks. The alliance came to be known as the *Shura-ye 'Ali-ye Hamahangi* and remained effective until mid-1996.

### *The fall of West Kabul (March 1995)*

The little known group, the Taliban, which swept through much of Afghanistan's southern and eastern provinces, following its liberation of a Pakistani trade convoy on its way through Afghanistan to Central Asia in 1994, reached the outskirts of Kabul in February 1995. Here,

they temporarily halted their offensive in consideration for the month of Ramadan, during which fighting is forbidden; although in reality they were preparing for their offensive on Kabul. Given their proximity to the centre of power, and their rapid advance through the country, the various political parties, including *Hizb-e Wahdat*, set about negotiating with the Taliban. By the end of Ramadan, some sort of agreement was apparently reached between the Taliban and *Hizb-e Wahdat*, wherein the two agreed not to fight one another, so that the latter could concentrate its strength in its defensive against government forces.

Consequently, following their successful defensive, on 6 March, against the forces of Massoud who had launched one of their heaviest offensives against *Hizb-e Wahdat*, the Party allowed Taliban forces inside its frontlines in West Kabul. However, once there, the Taliban proceeded to disarm *Hizb-e Wahdat* fighters, while at the same time, proving unable to defend their newly occupied positions against the government offensive and withdrawing. Within hours, government soldiers broke through *Hizb-e Wahdat* frontlines and entered West Kabul, for the first time since the Mujahideen had entered the city. West Kabul fell, ending three years of brave resistance by the Hazaras and Shi'as. In their withdrawal from West Kabul, the Taliban took with them the leader of *Hizb-e Wahdat*, Mazari, and seven of his trusted entourage, who were all found murdered within days of their departure from Kabul.

The fall of West Kabul, followed by the capture and murder of the leader of *Hizb-e Wahdat*, in effect brought to a rapid end a significant phase in the active presence and struggle of the Hazaras and Shi'as in Afghanistan. The emergence of the Taliban, backed by foreign powers, totally redefined political boundaries and developments in Afghanistan. The first force undermined by the Taliban was the *Hizb-e Islami*, followed by *Hizb-e Wahdat*, and a year later in late 1996, the coalition government of Kabul led by the *Jam'iyat-e Islami*. By the end of 1996 the Taliban were the most powerful military and political force in Afghanistan.

### 9.3 Phase two (1995–97)

The fall of West Kabul and the lost opportunity it represented had a deep effect on Hazara society. But, surprisingly, this proved both positive and negative. Although the fall represented another bitter defeat for the Hazaras, reminiscent of their defeat a century ago, the existence of a unified political party and leadership this time around

enabled the Hazaras to reorganize themselves quickly. The costly experiences gained has left Hazara society more aware and unified than ever before, both inside Afghanistan and abroad.

Following their withdrawal from Kabul, *Hizb-e Wahdat* faced, in 1995, a year of reconstruction and reorganization. The first step in this direction was the election to leadership of the Party's number two man and spokesman under Mazari, Abdul Karim Khalili. With the loss of control over West Kabul, the party moved its headquarters to Hazarajat and reassembled in Bamiyan. The following year, 1996, saw the formation of the *Shura-ye 'Ali-ye Difa'*, the alliance between *Hizb-e Wahdat*, *Jonbesh* and their enemy of the previous four years, *Jam'iyat*, against the Pakistani-backed Pashtun *Taliban*. After the capture of Kabul by *Taliban* from *Jam'iyat* in late 1996, *Hizb-e Wahdat* was once again faced with the options of either allying itself with or opposing the *Taliban*, as it had done in early 1995. Given the tragic outcome of that previous alliance, *Hizb-e Wahdat* opted this time to join the formation of the new anti-Taliban *Shura-ye 'Ali-ye Difa'*, under the leadership of Abdul Rashid Dostom, leader. Since then the Hazarajat and *Hizb-e Wahdat* have on the whole entered a period of relative stabilization. Thus, phase two is a continuation of the stabilization of Hazara society begun in phase one, without the military dimension. The outcome of this period depends very much on developments in Kabul and the position of the. If events favour the *Shura-ye Difa'*, there is room for hope for the future of peace and stability in Hazarajat. However, if the *Taliban* succeed, Hazarajat will once again fall into turmoil, with the anti-Pashtun sentiments of the Hazaras renewed, especially following the murder of their first and only leader, Mazari, by the *Taliban*.

#### 9.4 Social and cultural developments

The first half of the 1990s saw dramatic social and cultural developments in Hazara society, concomitantly with their military and political presence at the heart of the decisive struggles in West Kabul. These developments are some of the most dramatic and fascinating of recent times in Afghanistan. The coming together in true solidarity of the Hazaras inside and outside Afghanistan during the first five years of the decade was unprecedented for over a century. The cooperation of Hazaras inside Afghanistan and abroad played a significant role in the provision of funds for *Hizb-e Wahdat* and the introduction of the Party abroad.

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During this period Hazara society achieved the recognition and implementation of the notion of self-help. Deprived of the aid given to resistance groups throughout the 1980s, the Hazaras had eventually come to the realization that the only assistance they were going to receive was going to have to come from themselves. Consequently, 1996 saw the foundation of the University of Bamiyan in the heart of Hazarajat, as well as the re-opening of schools and the opening of new girls' schools. Extensive construction projects were also carried out, building roads connecting Bamiyan to northern Afghanistan, in particular Mazar, as well as to other parts of Hazarajat. Also constructed were residential complexes to house returning Hazara refugees from Iran and those displaced from West Kabul; a new town constructed in Ghazni to house 1000 families has been expanded to house 3000 families. Although far from satisfying the needs of a community numbering millions of people, these projects signal a novel sense of confidence by the Hazara community, especially in Hazarajat.



# Conclusion



This introductory study of the Hazaras of Afghanistan explored their origin, their evolution, and their present situation in contemporary Afghanistan. With regards their origin, we explored the weaknesses of the three existing predominant theories. We saw how the ancestors of present-day Hazaras may well have inhabited today's Hazarajat some 2300 years ago, much earlier than proposed by the autochthonicity theory on their origin, by suggesting that these early inhabitants had the same physical features as present-day Hazaras, and were of the Turkic tribes of Central Asia and Tibet. We also demonstrated that both the theories of the Hazaras as descendants of the Moghols and as a mixed race, as they stand, are incomplete and scientifically unfounded. From the information collated, we inferred that the Hazaras are ancient inhabitants of the area, though both they and present-day Hazarajat have been known by different names, and that Moghol and Turkic influence on them is undeniable but recent and far from unique.

We then took a general look at the evolution of Hazara history and society in leaps and bounds in order to arrive at the contemporary era. The justification for this was that it is the events of the past one hundred years or so that bear direct relevance to present-day Hazara society and Afghanistan, the exploration of both of which has been as much the aim of this study as the study of the origin and evolution of the Hazaras. In our analysis of the Hazaras over this latter period we needed to briefly review wider socio-historical developments in Afghanistan. Thus we looked at Afghan nationalism and the Afghanization, or Pashtunization, of Afghanistan over the past century. We saw how Afghan nationalism promoted ethnic, religious, and linguistic discrimination by the ruling Afghans, or Pashtuns, against all the other ethnic groups in Afghanistan. For examples of



policies implemented we looked at steps such as: the rewriting of history, the imposition of Pashto as the official language, the enforcement of Pashtun tribal identity as the 'national' identity regardless of the equally valued tribal identities of the non-Pashtun peoples of Afghanistan, and the resettlement of trans-border Pashtuns throughout Afghanistan on land already cultivated by native inhabitants, leading to the forced migration of these latter from the land of their forefathers. We further saw how, in the social pyramid of Afghanistan, the Hazaras, as Shi'as and Farsi-speakers, occupied the lowest rung.

By identifying the tribal nature of Afghanistan society and the position of the Hazaras within this pyramid, we arrived at an understanding of the factors underlying their underdevelopment and isolation in contemporary Afghanistan. Economically, we showed how the pursuit of the government's isolationist policies vis-à-vis the Hazaras led to the eventual famine of the 1970s in the Hazarajat, and how this impoverishment and undermining of the economic structure of Hazara society inevitably led to the weakness of the economy of Afghanistan in general. Politically and culturally, we revealed how the isolation of the Hazara population meant in turn the deprivation of the nation from a substantial section of its human resource and talent. Socially, we showed how the Hazaras were transformed into 'second class' citizens, subject to humiliation and suppression, and left behind by the modernization drive at the centre.

It was also seen, however, how despite everything, given the smallest opportunity the Hazaras have not only demonstrated remarkable resilience and talent, but have in fact managed to resume a significant and determining role in the future of Afghanistan. We saw this in two different spheres. We witnessed how, following the 1978 coup d'état, a minority of Hazaras inhabiting the cities, in particular Kabul, was able to take advantage of the albeit small but relatively positive circumstances to achieve substantial cultural, economic and political success. In rural areas too, after the 1978 coup d'état, there occurred among the Hazaras rapid and extensive political growth and development. This development led in the 1980s to the emergence of modern-style political parties, followed in the 1990s by the formation of a unified political and military movement under the umbrella of *Hizb-e Wahdat*, and participation in the current unfolding of events in Afghanistan.

In our study of the Hazaras we have also seen how the tribal pyramid structure of society in Afghanistan has not only not

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permitted any steps to be taken towards national unity and conciliation, but is by its very nature contradictory to national unity. We saw how, over the last one hundred years or so, virtually all the attention and energy of successive governments, instead of being directed at the promotion and attainment of national consensus, has been aimed in the totally opposite direction, namely promoting the exclusivist ethnic values and history of its ruling group. The inevitable outcome of such a social structure has been a society scarred by historical backwardness, socially disbanded, economically poor, culturally undernourished, inflicted with endless tribal and internecine conflicts, and most dangerously of all, a society providing an ideal ground for foreign intervention – in short, the reality of Afghanistan today. Any analysis and programme for development failing to recognize the nature and structure of society in Afghanistan is doomed to failure and even tragedy. The failure of the Soviet Union in implementing its plans in Afghanistan, followed by the failure of the Mujahideen and Western powers to form a united government are proof of this.

The study of Hazara society and the way in which rapid positive development has taken place during the period of social upheaval in Afghanistan since 1978, after such a long and destructive period of their history, allows a further conclusion. Change and upheaval in relations within the ruling social pyramid which have allowed the temporary preference of national values over tribal values demonstrated that not only can tribal conflicts in Afghanistan be resolved, but that these were never real conflicts, but were created and nurtured by the particular structure of a social pyramid formed deliberately on the basis of tribal values by those aiming to abuse and benefit from it. The very existence of such a structure demands and depends upon the presence of such conflicts. The very brief reign of Shah Amanullah (1919–29), when this structure collapsed, is further proof of this potential.

Finally, the study of the Hazaras demonstrates that only by leaving behind this social pyramid can Afghanistan make progress towards political stability, economic growth, and cultural evolution. Only once outside this pyramid, can Afghanistan begin to talk about 'nationhood', development, and growth, within the context of a democratic, open and peaceful society. Only then can tribal relations be superseded by national values, allowing the fruition and blossoming of suppressed talents and energies, and the development of the nation as a whole.

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Our study of Hazara society has indicated that not only are the Hazaras an untapped source of immense talent, energy and human resource, but that their particular socio-cultural characteristics, constructive attitude towards their needs arisen out of their historical predicament, and their important geo-political position can be of incomparable significance to the future of Afghanistan. Similarly, their continued absence, along with that of Afghanistan's other ethnic groups, in the formation of a free, democratic and progressive Afghanistan will be of grave national consequence, as history and recent events have demonstrated.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. See Razawi (1987: 1, 11); Farhang (1992, Vol. 1: 17–20).
2. While travelling from India towards ‘Afghanistan’ in 1836, on approaching the border, Vigne writes the following:  
‘a Patan galloped by me, exclaiming ‘Khorasan! Khorasan!’ . . . ‘Khorasan! Khorasan!’ was the cry, and every one in the caravan seemed to be aware, that the prospect of that country was at hand’ (Vigne, 1982: 103).
3. Even now, the name ‘Khorasan’ is used very widely for journals and publications, both within Afghanistan and abroad, e.g., *Khorasan*, published in Kabul; *Namah-ye Khorasan* and *Khorasan*, published in the USA; and *Neda-ye Khorasan*, published in Pakistan.
4. ‘Taboo’ here is used as defined in Scruton as: ‘A Polynesian word, used to mean any activity which is prohibited, or object which is untouchable or unmentionable . . . it is normal for the word to be used for all kinds of activities which are formally forbidden, but which fall outside the range of our normal rationalization’ (1982: 456). ‘Taboo’ and ‘totem’ may be used in more purely religious, or the wider social sphere. Here I am using both notions within the social context, as dimensions of ‘civil religion’ (Giddens, 1989: 460).
5. See the interesting and revealing interview by Griffiths with the then Prime Minister of Afghanistan, on the issue of Pashtunistan (1967: 62).
6. See Muhammad Gul Khan Momand and Qiyamuddin Khadim, in Pstrusinska (1985: 119–42); Shorish (1985: 1–12).
7. See Kakar (1971: Appendix XII and XIII); Abdur Rahman’s *farman* (decree) in Curzon (1923: 69–72).
8. See Griffiths (1967: 65–8).
9. In a conversation between myself, Dr Razawi and Dr Shahrani, in 1987 in Oxford, Dr Shahrani suggested that in his view the ethnic groups in Afghanistan fall into two categories: ‘*Afghan wa Afghan-tar*’ (the ‘Afghans’ and the ‘more Afghans’). His definition of this latter group was that the Pashtuns/Afghans in Afghanistan are treated as superior to the rest of the population. Given my wholehearted agreement with him on this issue, I take the liberty here of borrowing these two terms from him.

10. For more on the assimilation of the Hazaras, see Kakar (1973); Canfield (1973: 3).
11. The best examples of this can be seen in Ikbāl Ali Shah (1928 and 1938); Caroe (1986); Dupree (1980).
12. The policy of successive Kabul regimes over the past 100 years has been very clearly the promotion of domination by the Pashtuns over other ethnic groups in Afghanistan. For example, while all other groups were obliged to pay various taxes and send soldiers to the national army, Pashtun tribesmen were not only armed independently of the government and were free to travel through the south-eastern borders of the country, but were not even obliged to have proper official birth certificates (Ferdinand, 1963: 145); Kushan, 1990: 10–12).
13. See Ahmed (1986); Ghani (1978).
14. See Farhang (1992, Vol. 2: 640–2), for the first encounters of Pashtunism and nationalism.
15. See Hunter (1959: 342–47).
16. See Muhammad Gul Khan Momand in Pstrusinska (1985: 123–42).
17. See Qiyamuddin Khadim in Pstrusinska (1985: 119–21).
18. Based on an interview with Ahmad Ali Kohzad, one of Afghanistan's best known and most reliable historians, Gholam Hazrat Kushan writes the following:

His highness Sardar Mohammad Naim Khan greatly encouraged and set the pace for history writing in Afghanistan; as a result of which all history books which have been written over the past 40–50 years will have to be rewritten, one day. History books were written under his direct supervision; he would sit at the top of the room while each book was read out loud to him. [Most books] received changes and corrections of up to 50%, to the point where they bore little resemblance to their original contents. Perhaps the most painful event took place [one day] when following the omission of the name of King Amanullah Khan from one textbook, a book burning session was initiated, wherein countless books of value and significance were forever destroyed. This dreadful event took place in the proximity of the old building of the Ministry of Education, called the *Golestan-Saray*, housing the *Zarnigar Hall*. The Hall, site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence after the third Anglo-Afghan war, was also destroyed, at a later date, so that all that remains of this [historic] site is the Zarnigar Park, which had been named after it. If only the late Gholam Mohayyuddin, the librarian at the famous Habibia school, were alive, he could testify to the countless sackfuls of books burnt in the schoolyard, opposite the tomb of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan. [It is said that] some of the officials in charge of the bookburning session wept discreetly . . . In any case, all our 'commissioned' history books will one day have to be rewritten. (Kushan, 1990, Vol. 4: 14).

19. For more on the Pashtunistan issue, see Griffiths (1967: 50–64); Haqshinas (1984: 369, 377); Kushan (1990: 11–13); Hunter (1959).
20. Without doubt Louis Dupree was one of the most prolific foreign scholars on Afghanistan, having devoted more than half of his life to the



study of Afghanistan society and people. However, his book, *Afghanistan*, first published in 1973 and later reprinted in 1978 and 1980 with relevant corrections and additions, is based primarily on research carried out during the 1950s and 1960s, the period which witnessed the peak of the 'Pashtunization' process in Afghanistan. As such the book's content has been highly influenced by the Afghan nationalist sentiments and propaganda so effectively being disseminated by the government. Examples of this can be seen in chapter 6 (pages 57–65), and chapter 7 (pages 66–94). For example, he writes of the Hazaras: 'About 870,000 probably arrived in Afghanistan between AD 1229–1447 (Bacon, 1951)' (1980: 60). To any reader unfamiliar with the situation inside Afghanistan, terms such as 'arrived', or the census figures provided, numbering the Hazaras at 870,000 and the Pashtuns at 6.5 million, can easily lead to a distorted understanding of the Hazara people, for example: Hazaras = newly arrived minority = non-Afghanistani.

Any reader of Dupree's book would be justified in concluding that, in a country with a majority of Pashto-speaker, it is only right to have Pashto as the official national language, and so would be confused to find that the government's policy in this regard should end in 'disaster' (Dupree himself comments briefly – pp. 66 and 70 – on the apparent failure of the Pashtunization process). Dupree's book is written on the misleading basis that anyone from Afghanistan is Afghan, using the term as he does to refer even to non-Afghans in the country. Such a misconception was in fact the intended aim of the politics and language of the Afghan nationalist government of the time.

21. Although it is believed that the Kalashas of Chitral are an entirely separate people from the Kafirs of Nuristan, and that the Kalashas speak an Indian language, the Kalashas believe themselves to be of the same ethnic group as the Nuristanis (see Peter Parkes, 1990, 'The Kalasha', *Disappearing World*).
22. See the very interesting article by Canfield (1976), 'Suffering as Religious Imperative in Afghanistan'.

### 1 Who are the Hazaras?

1. The best reference is the famous book by Ghobar, *Afghanistan in the Course of History* (1980: 33–5). The book, which was banned and thus difficult to come by in Afghanistan before 1978, is considered one of the most reliable and authoritative references on the history of Afghanistan. This writer undertook the republishing of Ghobar's book in Iran in 1980 and applied its errata in the text correctly. See also Farhang (1992, Vol. 1: 13–14).
2. See Lee and Newby (1983: 3).
3. A well-known anecdote also goes thus: 'whenever a Nuristani tires from working on the land, he throws his tools to the ground and proclaims in anger: "I want to go to Greece!"'
4. Bellew, in *The Races of Afghanistan* (1880: 109–12), has very interesting information on the Tajiks and the roots of the name *Tajik*. Farhang

(1992, Vol. 1: 22), has more recent findings regarding the Tajiks. Rashiduddin Fazlullah (1338/1959, Vol. I: 344, 356), talks of *Tazik* and *Tazhik*.

5. No substantial research has been carried out on the Sayyeds of Afghanistan so far. It is generally believed that the Sayyeds are descendants of the prophet's daughters. Those descended from Fatimatuz Zahra are Shi'a Sayyeds, and those descended from the prophet's other daughters are Sunni Sayyeds. The Sayyeds have clear knowledge of their lineage, clan and kin. In certain Islamic countries, the Sayyeds have a certain caste system, like the Hindu Brahmans. For example, among the Shi'as in Afghanistan, daughters of Sayyeds cannot marry non-Sayyed men, whereas the reverse is quite common. The Sayyeds are greatly respected in Muslim societies, especially among Shi'a Muslims.

According to both Sunni and Shi'a documents and writings, Fatimatuz Zahra was not just the Prophet's eldest daughter; she was also the first woman to be born a Muslim and was greatly loved by her father, the Prophet. Furthermore, she married Ali, the first man to become a Muslim, and the Prophet's closest friend and ally. As such she has become the model for Muslim women in Islamic societies. Ali is Islam's fourth Caliph, and is regarded by the Shi'as as their first Imam. He has also written a book, *Nahjul Balaghah*, Islam's most significant book of reference after the Quran. The name of the University of Al Azhar in Cairo, the oldest centre of learning in the Islamic world, was also chosen by the Fatimid dynasty (Ismaili Shi'as) of Egypt after the name of Zahra (*The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1960, Vol. 1: 613–821). See also Kopecky (1982: 89–110; Barfield, 1981: 5–6).

6. For the current situation of the Punjabi Hazaras see Ahmed, 'Hazarawal: Formation and Structure of District Ethnicity' in *Pakistan Society* (1986: 100–20). See also Ridgway (1983: 5); Caroe (1986: 163, 291, 294, 299, 300).
7. Although Habibi is regarded as one of Afghanistan's foremost scholars, it is my belief that his works should be studied with a great deal of caution, in view of his previous deeds. Habibi is well-known for his talent for discovering, not to mention fabricating, false documents and references. For further information on Habibi, see Herawi (1983: 90–6); Yazdani (1989: 173–8).
8. See Arghiri, 'White-Settler Colonialism and the Myth of Investment Imperialism' in *New Left Review* (1972, No. 73: 35–54).
9. See *The Palestinian Homeland*; this short booklet of twelve pages shows very clearly the process of the settlement of the non-Palestinian Jews in Palestine since 1920, using four chronologies and four maps.
10. One of the best examples is the language of *Urdu*. *Urdu* is a Turkish word meaning 'army' and came into being as a coded language used by the military for the first time after the contact and mixture of Farsi and Hindi, during the rule of the Moghol Empire. With time, it became the language of the people of northern India, and gradually that of its men of letters such as Ghalib, Dihlawi, Bidil and Iqbal, whose contributions elevated Urdu to its peak. Today, it is the language of some 300 million people as the official language of Pakistan and one of the languages of

India. In the music world also Urdu has its own place. the seven *ragas* of Indian music; the *sitar* and the Qawali tradition of singing were also created in Urdu by Nasir Khosrau Dihlawi. It is perhaps interesting to point out that all the accomplished Urdu poets and writers were equally accomplished in Farsi.

11. *Tanzeem-e Nasl-e Nau-e Hazara-e Moghol* was founded during the first half of the 1970s in Quetta, Pakistan. In 1988, when I visited their headquarters, still located in Maryabad, I was told that plans were under way for the establishment of an 'Hazara Academy'. This organization holds an annual conference on the situation of the Hazaras, attended by Hazaras from Afghanistan and Iran. As well as this organisation, another by the name of 'Hazara Student Federation' also exists. The women's section of the Federation publishes a journal *Tolo'i Fikr* (The Dawn of Thought) in Urdu and Farsi. Another literary journal is also published by Hazara scholars in Quetta, also in Urdu and Farsi, titled *Ogal*.
12. During my trip to Quetta in the summer of 1988, I was shown the handwritten works of Shaikh Nasser Ansari, comprising a finished manuscript and one left unfinished at the time of his death. None of Ansari's works have been published, and I am grateful to his son Mohammad Ali for having allowed me to look through these. One of the most important works completed by Shaikh Nasser Ansari is a comprehensive ancestral tree of the Hazaras, the first of its kind, taking the Hazaras back to Changiz Khan (see Appendix 1).
13. Nikodar, great-grand-son of Changiz Khan.
14. There are many documents on the original natives of Hazarajat in both Arabic and Farsi. The best research on these is an article by Shah Ali Akbar Shahrstani, 'Gharch and Gharchistan', in: *Gharjistan* (1987, No. 1: 22–42, 1988a, No. 5: 37–43, 1988b, No. 1: 53–67). According to Shahrstani, the oldest name of Hazarajat was *Gharshistan*, *Gharchistan*, or *Gharjistan*; *ghar* meaning mountain in Farsi and *gharjistan* meaning mountainous or land of the mountains. This was later called *Ghor*, also meaning mountain, so that *Ghor* and *Gharjistan* were both names of the same place. *Gharjistan* had its own rulers, known as *Shar*. See also Farhang (1992, Vol. 1: 23–4); Hafiz Abro (1971: 35–39, 111–12).
15. Foreign scholars were rarely given permission to travel to the Hazarajat. Several reasons were given such as lack of safety, though few were genuine. This was the case until the 1970s, except in the case of a handful of scholars trusted by the government. Bacon who carried out research on the Hazaras during 1939, writes: 'For political reasons it was not possible to go into the Hazarajat proper' (1951: 2).
16. New information on Faiz Mohammad Katib has recently been published in journals in Kabul and in Iran; *Gharjistan* (1988, No. 7); *Hablullah* (1984, No. 41: 52–6); see also Nayel (1985).
17. See Popper (1957).
18. According to Bellew: 'even the term Hazara was not in use among them' (1880: 114).
19. *Tar* or *dambourah* in today's Hazaragi, is a plucked lute with two strings, known as *dotar* in Herat.

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20. For example, see the works of Faiz Mohammad Katib such as *Sirajut Tawarikh*.
21. See Shahrستاني, *Qamoos-e Lahja-e Hazaragi Dari* (1981). See also Dulling, (1973: Introduction).
22. According to Raverty '[The] names of *Karluk* or *Karlugh* signify "the father of snow" or "pertaining to snow"' (1888: 281). Rashiduddin Fazlullah, on the other hand, offers a different meaning: 'It is said that while travelling back from Ghor and Gharjistan to his homeland of Yort, Oghoz and his people came across expansive mountains. There was a big snowfall and many families decided not to continue but to stay and settle at that spot. This was uncustomary and not to Oghoz's liking, who did not consider a heavy snowfall an acceptable reason for resettlement, and so gave those who remained the new name of *Qarluq*, meaning the "God of snow". It is from these settlers that the entire *Qarluq* population is said to be descended' (1338/1959, Vol. 1: 34).
23. The suffix *zai* is Farsi and comes from the verb *zayedān* meaning to give birth. As Pashto like Urdu has many Farsi and Arabic words, it has come to use *zai* as a common suffix, with a similar meaning to 'son' in Johnson and Robertson. Indeed, this suffix is now much more widely used in Pashto than in Farsi.

### 2 Social structure

1. *Khanawar* means joint family. *Dudrau* or *Dudman*, literally meaning chimney, is used here to mean family or household, i.e., people meeting at least once a day and sharing meals under one roof or from one kitchen.
2. As used in Hazarajat: *Tayifa-e Arbab Gharibdad*, or the expression *Khan Khil*.
3. This mistake was even made in the most recent conference held in Kabul in 1987, with the participation of the leaders of the PDPA, along with several leading Afghanistani scholars and Hazara representatives; the conference was titled 'The Hazara People's National Conference'. The same mistake can also be seen in the first issue of *Gharjistan*, the first Hazara publication to appear in Afghanistan in recent times.
4. In a conversation with Dr Ahmad Jawid, ex-Chancellor of Kabul University and specialist on Farsi literature, he pointed out that the reason that only the Hazaras are called *Qaumu* in Afghanistan is that the word is of Turko-Moghol origin, meaning, wise, priest and magician. See *Farhang-e Mo'in* (Persin Dictionary 1963, Vol. 2: 2625-6).
5. The Hazaras wrote this reply to Abdur Rahman in the 1890s: 'And why did ye Afghan officials mention four Governments in your letter as being your neighbours? Why did ye not say five Governments were your neighbours, so as to include ours? We advise you, for your own good and safety, that ye keep away from us' (Sultan, Mohammad Mir Munshi, 1980, Vol. I: 279).
6. This information was given to this writer by Mr Khoda Nazar Qambari, assistant to Elizabeth Bacon during her visit to Quetta, Pakistan in the 1950s.



## Notes

7. *Ulus* is a Turko-Mogholi word meaning people or soldier; it also refers to feudal lord (Temirkhanov, 1980: 13). On *Ulus* as a Turko-Mogholi word, Redhouse writes: 'ulus: one of the four leasing Turanian tribes. Each *ulus* is subdivided into clans (*eil*); each clan into septs (*oimaq*); these into detachments (*boi*); and these again into families (*oruq*), (Redhouse, 1884: 269). For more information see: Hony, 1950:359; Alderson and Fahir iz, 1974: 356; and on *Jirga* or *Jargah* see: Mo'in, 1985, Vol. 1: 1220; Borhan, 1983, Vol. 2: 569; Shad, 1956, Vol. 2: 1326.
8. See Chapter 5, section 5.2 for names of parties.
9. In a conversation with this writer in the Autumn of 1989 in Tizak, members of the Behsud gave the following reply when asked by me as to why they were unwilling to inter-marry with Ismaili Hazaras: 'Before the coup d'état and the arrival of the Iranian mullas into Afghanistan, there were no differences between us and the Ismailis; we inter-married and had other social relations. But the Iranian mullas brought the present differences, along with conflicts between different Shi'a groups, with them from Iran.'
10. The Hazaras numbered one and a half million at the end of the 19th century according to Temirkhanov (1980:39). It is therefore reasonable to expect the Hazara population to have almost doubled by this latter half of the 20th century.
11. Although I regard with suspicion geographic maps, and in particular ethnic geographic maps, it nevertheless remains the only means of indicating the approximate location of the Hazarajat in relation to the rest of Afghanistan. Of the two available maps, Gharjistani (1988), and Qambari (1987), both by Hazaras, I chose to include the latter because it appears to be more in keeping with other documents and information on the period before 1890. Nevertheless, this map is doubtless as much a product of ethnic aspirations as the map illustrated in Dupree. Clearly, it is advisable to regard both maps primarily as helpful approximations and indications, rather than exact demarcations.
12. For example, see the map of 'Ethnic Groups' in Dupree, p. 58. According to this map, used widely throughout the 1980s by newcomers to the field of Afghanistan studies, one-third of the land in Afghanistan has been allocated to the Pashtuns. It should perhaps more accurately be renamed the map of Pashtunistan or ethnic expansionist aspiration. It is possible that Qambari's map of the Hazarajat before 1890 (pp. 67-8) is a reaction to such maps.
13. Every people, once converted to a new religion or system of beliefs, whether voluntarily or by force, retain certain elements of their previous set of beliefs which usually find expression in their social and cultural values. This is sometimes quite conscious and overt (in cases when there is no conflict between these and the new set of beliefs); at other times this is practised indirectly or covertly (when there is obvious conflict, such as between the old and new system of prayer). In the latter case, old practices are carried out under the guise of the new, while the essential beliefs remain unchanged. Such is the case with the Hazaras and their continued respect for trees, the sea, the mountains, and soon (e.g. Band-e Amir lakes) beliefs respected no less than the Hazaras' Islamic values.



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Indeed disrespect for the earlier beliefs is condemned to the same degree as that for their more recent Islamic beliefs. For further information see Hasan Poladi (1989: 143–5, 147–53).

### 3 Culture and belief

1. For more information on Shi'ism and its different sub-sects see: Tabataba'i, (1975: 75–84), and Habibi (1988: 185–9, 861–94).
2. See Ross's Introduction to Harlan (1939); and Temirkhanov (1980: Introduction).
3. For more information see Nawid and Dayfoladi, 1995; *Imroz-e Ma*, 1995, Vol. 1, Nos. 3–13; *Rasa*, 1995, Vol. 1, No. 4.
4. There are two different types of *Maddah* in Afghanistan: those who sing in private homes at literary and Sufi gatherings or at *takiya khana*, and those who sing on streets and at market gatherings or *zearatgah* in return for money. This latter, known also as *sadoo*, is an Indian tradition which has found its way into Afghanistan. It is my opinion that both are descended from an even older Persian tradition known as *naqqali*. *Naqqal*, or reciters at *naqqali* sessions, would traditionally wear battle dress and armour and recite famous epic stories or poems. *Naqqali* could be regarded as an early form of traditional popular theatre.
5. For examples see the collection of poetry by Bulbul (1986), and Balkhi (1985), Dehqan and Ashqari in *Nama-e Khorasan* (1990, No. 3: 59–60; No. 4: 48–51).
6. In Farsi: Moballegh, Nayel, Bamiyani, Misaq, Nasib, Golkohi etc. In Arabic: Modarris, Mohaqqiq, Fayyaz, etc. In English: Foladi, Qambari, etc.
7. Excerpts from full version by Sho'ur, in *Gharjistan* (1988, No. 5: 52–4).
8. Poem and translation, with some changes, from Ferdinand (1959: 39–40). The same *ghazal*, with an additional four couplets, also appeared in *Gharjistani*, (1988: 206–7).
9. See Z. Siddiqi (1988: 67–73), and A. Sho'ur, (1988: 49–65), both in *Gharjistan*, No. 5.
10. See Bindemann (1988, No. 21: 17–18), for a short article on Sarwar Sarkhosh. This writer also has some two hours of poetry on more social and political issues by Sarkosh on audio tape.

### 4 Socio-economic relations and mode of production

1. *Pir* is a Farsi word meaning 'old'. However, it has come to have a symbolic meaning in Sufi literature implying 'spiritual guide or teacher'. Among the Shi'as in Afghanistan the term *pir* is also used in referring to *Sayyeds*.
2. In Shi'a jurisprudence, there are two different taxes: *zakat*, tax on produce, and *khoms*, tax on income. In Sunni jurisprudence, however, there is only *zakat*. In the Quran, *zakat* is repeatedly mentioned and given the same significance as *namaz* (daily prayer), while *khoms* is not mentioned at all. It is therefore generally believed that *khoms* was a tax

added later on by Shi'a Imams, in order to finance the socio-political activities of the Shi'a minority, since *zakat* was paid directly to the government. Shi'a economists refer to *knoms* also as 'tax'. The term *khoms* is Arabic, meaning 'one-fifth', so that the *khoms* tax is one-fifth of annual income. There are two types also of *khoms* itself: *sahm-e imam* and *sahm-e sadat*. The former, meaning 'Imam's share', is the share of tax reserved for Shi'a religious leaders, while the latter, meaning 'share of the descendants of the Imams', refers to the share of tax reserved for Shi'a Sayyeds (Banisadr, 1978: 205-6).

3. In the autumn of 1989, on a visit to Bamiyan, I was told that the cultivation of potatoes had been extremely successful. In 1988, some twelve different types of potato had been successfully grown. Subsequently, Bamiyan has become one of the major regional suppliers of potatoes to Kabul and other cities. For newly introduced crops see: Poladi (1989: 333); Canfield (1973: 20).
4. One *ser* = 7.066 kg; 1 *jerib* = 0.195 hectares.
5. For example, Mir Yazdan Bakhsh of Behsud who nearly succeeded to establish a strong, centralized, and united leadership in Hazarajat. See Mohan Lal (1846, Vol. 1: 192-213).
6. For information on the natural resources of the Hazarajat, see Dienes (1989: 78-9); Schroder (1989: 109).
7. The expression '*Aga qaum-o khish dari, pushtt-o da koha*' is also indicative of the centrality of clan and kinship in Hazara social structure and organisation. In other words, the social respect, strength and security of a Hazara is linked closely to his clan and kinship relations. The wider and stronger these relations are, the higher his social and clan standing. Consequently, effort is made to restrict even economic activity to members of one's clan. For example, virtually all the bakeries in Kabul are run by Behsudi Hazaras; or it is only Turkman Hazaras who deal in secondhand car spare parts in the cities. Within different clans also, further restrictions tend to exist. For example, among Behsudi Hazaras each *tol* usually monopolizes one form of economic activity, e.g. the trading of secondhand clothes is almost entirely carried out by the Qol-e Khish *tayefa*.

The fundamental role of clan and kinship relations in the social organisation of the Hazaras can be seen in inter-*tayefa* or inter-*qaum* marriages. Such marriages in fact serve the purpose of extending the influence and strength of respective clans within the wider network. In the past Hazara Mirs would marry women from various *qaums* and *tayefas* in order to establish a wider network of support and the confidence to allow him to extend his sphere of influence. Today such marriages take place mainly between two *qaums* or *tayefas*, giving rise to expressions such as: 'he has married into the [name of clan] clan', or 'so and so is related to the [name of clan] clan'.

8. Siddiqi (1987: 57) divides this class into three:
  - (a) landless peasants
  - (b) small land-owning peasants
  - (c) feudal lords.

## 5 Socio-political change in Hazara society

1. For examples, see the map, and *farman* issued by Abdur Rahman, in Curzon (1923: 69–72). This map, which was printed on canvas and measures four by four and a half feet, is one of the rare documents from the period.
2. *Siahchal* (black wells) were prisons, dug 20–40 metres underneath the ground, whose only exit was the hole through which prisoners and food were sent down inside; this was the only inlet for air and light. Those imprisoned in *siahchal* were never seen again; they remained under the ground, alive or dead, among the bones of their predecessors. The period of the reign of Abdur Rahman Khan is considered as the starting point not only of *siahchal* prisons, but also of a whole range of new and particularly horrific prisons and methods of torture, quite unique and unprecedented in the history of Afghanistan.
3. This biography, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, by Mir Munshi Sultan Mohammad Khan, which was published in London in 1901, was later translated from English into Farsi by Munshi Gholam Mortoza Qandahari under the title of *Tajut Tawarikh* and was published in Mashad, Bombay and Lahore. A comparison of the two texts reveals substantial differences in content between the two. Furthermore, the two volumes of the English version are inconsistent with one another. These two factors raise the question of authenticity of the documents. Farhang's recent findings on this matter suggest that the first volume of the English version was probably dictated by Abdur Rahman himself (though written by a secretary) during his exile in Russia at the request of General Kaufman, and then translated into English and Russian as a useful document on Afghanistan, by Britain and Russia. Later on, after Abdur Rahman came to power, he completed this and published it as his official biography under the title of *Pand Nama-e Donia wa Din*, in Kabul in 1886. At this time, an Indian by the name of Sultan Mohammad, employed as court translator and scribe in Kabul, rather abruptly and without trace, left Kabul for India and then on to England, where he published this latter book in English in two volumes. Of these two volumes, the first is the original *Pand Nama-e Donia wa Din*, while the second was actually written by Sultan Mahmmd himself. This can easily be detected in the discrepancies in the content of the two volumes, one by Abdur Rahman himself and the other by Sultan Mahmmd; differences in literary style and sophistication are also quite evident, as the Amir was not an accomplished writer.
4. Although these inter-Pashtun wars began after the death of Timur Shah (1793), they lasted until 1836. The wars, considered as 'feudal' by Ghobar (1980: 393, 509, 517), are referred to as 'internecine/family feud' by Farhang (1992: 175–213), who also classifies them into three periods:
  - (a) wars fought by the sons of Timur Shah over sucessionship (1793–1818),
  - (b) wars between the two families of Sadozai and Mohammadzai, over the throne in Kabul (1818–36),
  - (c) internecine wars among the Mohammadzai over the throne (1823–36), (ibid.: 321–6).

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It is my opinion, however, that in fact these wars lasted until 1880, for the reign of Shir Ali Khan was also more or less dominated by internecine wars among the Mohammadzai family.

### 6 Old people, new societies

1. For examples see Sami'i (1984).
2. In addition to the Hazaras of Posht-e Band, Gharjistani (1988: 275–88) names over thirty other groups of previously unidentified and unknown Hazras, living in the northern region of the Hindu Kush.
3. All quotations taken from two extensive taped interviews with Burgutt Khoda Nazar Qambari during the summer of 1988 in Pakistan. Sadly, Khoda Nazar died in 1989.
4. Further details of the return of the Hazaras to Afghanistan can be found in interviews carried out by me with Ustad Ghulam Nabi, during the summer of 1988 in Pakistan. Sadly, Ustad Ghulam Nabi died in the summer of 1990 in Quetta.
5. For more see Poladi (1989: 266–9).
6. Ibid.: 261–6.
7. Surprisingly, it is not only Gharjistani and sections of the Hazara population in Pakistan who revere Changiz Khan. Recently, the People's Republic of Mongolia honoured Changiz Khan in an unexpected reappraisal of their history. (The Guardian, 3 August 1989, London & Manchester).
8. For example see *Tahrik-e Pakistan Medal* (Pakistan Movement Medal), 14 August 1987, under the names of: Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan, Sardar Isa Khan, Sardar Mohammad Yazdan Khan, Captain Gul Mohammad, and Haji Nasir Ali.
9. One of the papers presented at the conference, read by Burgutt Khuda Nazar Qambari in English (1987: 12, 14), included a resolution in three sections containing eleven articles. This resolution was in fact the outcome of the *Tanzeem* conference held in Quetta in 1987.
10. *Barbar* is a Greek term from *Barbaros* = Barbarous, meaning 'uncivilized, cruel, savage, unrefined in taste, conduct or habits' (Hornby, A. S., 1988: 63). According to Siddiqi, the term was used by the Greeks when referring to non-Greeks or anyone speaking with an unrefined accent. It was generally used as an insult, and has in time also taken on racist connotations (1987: 47). Others call 'Berber' the Hazaras inhabiting the mountainous region of central Afghanistan, between Kabul and Herat. See 'Berber' in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1960, No. 1: 1173–87).
11. See also Siddiqi in *Gharjistan* (1987, No. 1: 52).
12. This bread, also baked in Mashhad and Tehran, is similar to the *Panja Kahsi* bread eaten in the Hazarajat and Kabul. It is generally 75 cms long and 30 cms wide (Yazdani 1989: 114). Allama Dehkhuda writes: 'Berber bread is a type of rough bread, known as Afghan [Afghanistani] Berber, because it was introduced into Tehran during the reign of the Qajars by [Hazara] Berbers' (1970, *Loghat Namah*, Letter B: 823; See also Mo'in, M., 1985, Vol. 1: 497).



## 7 Hazaras in contemporary Afghanistan

1. In my opinion, arguments based on the minority/majority criterion are generally motivated by politics. This is especially true in the case of a country such as Afghanistan, where the single most significant policy and political aim of the government has been the promotion of domination by the Pashtuns over all other ethnic groups. Furthermore, an accurate census is as yet to be carried out in Afghanistan; existing figures are entirely unreliable so that any claims to demographic majority by any one group must be considered as highly suspicious and discriminatory. Consequently, it is perhaps best simply not to include the majority/minority criterion in any serious academic discussion. Unfortunately, most scholars who have so far studied Afghanistan have allowed themselves this lack of caution. Examples are Griffiths (1967: 66); Clifford (1973: 44–5); Dupree (1980: 60); Tapper (1983: 11, 64).
2. For more on the role of the Hazaras in the socio-political history and development of Afghanistan, see Siddiqi in *Gharjistan* (1987, No. 1: 61–3); Yazdani (1987: 1–20).
3. The process of the Afghanization policies should, in my opinion, be studied in two phases:
  - (a) the Afghanization of Khorasan = Afghanistan,
  - (b) the Pashtunization of Afghanistan = Pashtunistan.While the first phase has been relatively successful, the second has failed completely. For more see: Griffiths (1967: 50–64); Haqshinas (1984: 369–81).
4. For examples, see Ziring (1981).
5. *Sirajul Akhbar*, 14 September 1914, in Mir Hossain Shah (1976: 7). For more, see Pstrusinska (1990: 26–36); Herawi (1983: 103, 115, 161–2).
6. This is obligatory; not only is the worker not paid any wages nor does he qualify for insurance, he is himself responsible for providing the cost of his meals and transport to and from work, and sometimes even the tools needed for the job.
7. Maqsudi refers to this as *rojan-e sherkat*, which he discusses at length in his book, pp. 25–33.
8. Gharjistani has uncovered new information on this issue, providing further proof of the government's discriminatory policy towards the Hazaras. In a chapter, entitled 'The Dissolution of Hazarajat', Gharjistani cites examples of the government's outright rejection of several attempts by Hazara MPs to the central Government (1988: 39–47).
9. Based on documents, Shi'a mullas had no independent organization or political activity before 1978. On the whole, they fell into two factions: conservative or reactionary mullas, and progressive or revolutionary mullas. The former supported Zaher Shah and regarded him as *zillullah* (the shadow of God), while the latter held the Shah solely responsible for the underdevelopment, corruption and oppression in Afghanistan. Of this latter group, the most famous were: Sayyed Anwar Shah (killed in prison), Sayyed Ismail Balkhi, (imprisoned for fourteen years), and Ismail Moballegh and Sayyed Misbah, (both executed by the new regime after



the 1978 coup d'état). Of these, only Ismail Balkhi had undertaken political activity during the 1950s–60s. The political activity of the progressive section of the Sh'ia clergy between 1960–78 generally manifested itself alongside the margins of intellectual and academic opposition forces. The only proper opposition political organization during this period was the *Pasdaran-e Ingelabi-e Afghanistan*.

### 8 The Hazaras in the 1980s

1. Sultan Ali Kistmand was not only held the position of Prime Minister in the 1980s, but is also the second most powerful man in the Cabinet after President Najibullah. This is of great consequence, not just symbolic, but because it is generally believed that since the election of Najibullah, Kistmand was the brains and power behind the President. This level of power in the hands of a Hazara has itself been sufficient to anger and alienate even Communist Pashtun members of the government to the point where many analysts, inside and outside of Afghanistan, consider this as the major factor behind the successive inter-Party coup d'états of the 1980s, leading to the final successful coup of 1992. This particular concern was also expressed by anti-Communist Pashtun opposition, based abroad. In 1983, at a private gathering in Peshawar I was told, by attending members of the *Afghan Millat* (Afghan Nation) Party, that the two factors lying behind their continued opposition to the Kabul regime were: a) its Communist ideology, and b) the election of a Hazara to the post of Prime Minister.
2. For more information see *Gharjistan* (1987, No. 1: 1–21).
3. For examples see Mihrban in *Gharjistan* (1989, No. 8: 19–29); Shahrستاني, also in *Gharjistan* (1989, No. 9: 26–44).
4. The *Jirga-ye Sarasari-e Milliyat-e Hazara* (the All Hazara National Symposium) was, in fact, a political conference organized in order to establish the *Shura-e Markazi-e Milliyat-e Hazara* (the Central Council of the Hazara National). A few months later, the name of the *Shura* was changed to *Markaz-e Insejam-e Omur-e Milliyat-e Hazara* (Centre for the Coordination of Hazara National Affairs). For more information see speeches by Kistmand and Fakoor in *Gharjistan* (1989, No. 11: 119–36).
5. Excerpts from a letter by Hussain Nayel (13/9/1989) to me. It should be noted that the letter does not include studies carried out outside of Afghanistan, in Iran, Pakistan, Europe and the USA.
6. The best overview and analysis of the political-military resistance in Hazarajat is a booklet by the *Sazman-e Mujahideen*, entitled *Osul-e Elmi-e Jihad* (Scientific Principles of Jihad), produced in 1988. Though it has not been published in English, excerpts translated into English are available. In my opinion, this is one of the most detailed and accurate documents on the political and military situation throughout Afghanistan during the 1980s.
7. 13. Unfortunately, there are no figures on the number of Hazaras killed in the Iran–Iraq war during the 1980s. However, it is said that several thousands did go to the front, either because of personal religious

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fervour, or under pressure from Hazara Shi'a Parties in Iran. According to two documents procured by me, it would appear that financial compensation was made by the Iranian Government to these Parties in return for those killed; an unprecedented phenomenon even for Afghanistan. (see Appendix 5.)

8. See Constitution and decrees of *Shura-ye I'tilaf-e Islami-e Afghanistan*, 1987: 1–6.
9. See Constitution and decrees of *Shura-ye I'tilaf-e Islami-e Afghanistan*, 1987: 2–5.
10. In a second meeting held in Pakistan in 1989 with several Hazara *Arbabs*, whom I had first met in Behsud in 1980, it was made clear that since the 1980s these *Arbabs* no longer enjoy the same economic and overall power, as before, in the Hazarajat. In the face of their new political competition, i.e. the newly formed Hazara Parties and organizations, they lost much of their previous unchallenged power. Two of the best known examples were: Arbab Gharibdad in Behsud, and Sayyed Beheshti in Varas (in Bamiyan Province), who in effect surrendered all power to Hazara political organizations of the area.
11. Day Chupan, in Ghazni province, which had been forcefully confiscated and inhabited by the Pashtuns after the failure of the 1893 uprisings, was retaken by the Hazaras almost one century later after a reportedly bloody battle during the spring and summer of 1990. This is clearly of immense significance to the Hazaras, but it also marks a turning point in the history of Afghanistan as a whole.
12. See *Payam-e Mostaz'affin* (1987, No. 67/68: 105–11).

## 9 The Hazaras in the 1990s

1. *Ihya -ye Huwyyat: Majmu'aye Sokhanrani ha-ye Ustad-e Shaheed*, 1995 (Collection of Mazari's speeches), p. 75.

In an interview with the BBC, in response to the question 'has *Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami*, which [before 1992] had the *jihad* as its main aim, now replaced that aim with its struggle for the attainment of the rights of minority and ethnic groups?', Mazari replied: 'Yes. As long as the presence of the Russians [Soviets] and their puppet regime continued, a *jihad* was necessary. [We] fought the *jihad* until the Russians [Soviets] left and their puppet regime failed. But now that the people rule, in order to form a government it is necessary to take into consideration the rights of the different ethnic groups' (La'li, 1990: 10–11).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
3. Until 1978 the US was simply not interested in the fate of Afghanistan, considering it to be inconsequential, and what little diplomatic relations existed supported the country's ruling group. The coming to power of a socialist regime in 1978, followed by the 1979 Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, served as a rude awakening which changed totally the position of the US *vis-à-vis* Afghanistan, and signalled a new pro-activism in the politics of the country. The reason for this sudden change of policy by the US was explained thus by the most persistent of pro-Mujahideen

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- lobbyists, congressman Charles Wilson: 'I viewed this as an opportunity to defeat the Soviets in the battlefield. We lost 58,000 men in Vietnam. The Russians have lost maybe 25,000 dead in Afghanistan. I figure they owe us 33,000 dead' (Arney, 1990: 157).
4. See Tooran Nashir, 1993: 2, and Kristian Berg Harpvikin, 1995: 99–104, 115–16.
  5. Most interesting was the intensification of the activities of *Hizb-e Wahdat* as compared with Alliance Parties in Peshawar, as reported by *AfghaNews*, published by the *Jami'at Islami* itself in Peshawar: '*Hizb-e Wahdat* has opened offices in Germany, Austria and Denmark to promote political and cultural works (sic.) in these countries . . . While the Peshawar-based Mujahideen are closing some of their offices abroad due to financial problems, the Iran-based *Hizb-e Wahdat* has intensified its political activities. It sent a delegation to Cairo to present its views during the OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting. Later, a delegation went to New York to talk with UN officials about Afghan issues, when the General Assembly wanted to pass a resolution on the Afghan problem' (*AfghaNews*, 1990, Vol. 6, No. 23: 8). A few months later it was reported again in the *AfghaNews*: 'Financial problems have forced the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) to reduce the size of most of its ministries. About 4600 Afghans lost their jobs as a result of this decision' (*AfghaNews* 1991, Vol. 7, No. 3: 5).
  6. For the unprecedented support, financial and otherwise, given to *Hizb-e Wahdat*, see *Bayaniyaha, I'lamiyaha wa Tomarha-ye Himayat az Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami* (collection of documents in support of the Party), 1990, No. 4.
  7. See *Marja'iyat wa Zohour-e an dar Jami'a-ye Tashayyo'-e Afghanistan*, 1993: 26–41.
  8. See *Zandagi-namah-ye Shaheed Hojatul Islam-e wal- Moslemin Ustad Mazari wa Yaranash*, 1995: 5–64
  9. See interview with Ustad Borhani, in *Namah-ye Khabari-ye Hizb-e Wahdat*, Vol. 4, No. 44, pp. 2–3, 5.
  10. For more on the Afshar massacre, see *Namah-ye Khabari-ye Wahdat*, 1993, Vol. 1, No. 11: 1–7; 1994, Vol. 2, No. 24: 5–8; 1995, Vol. 3, No. 37: 1–3, 7–10, London. *Wahdat News Bulletin*, 1993, Vol. 1, No. 1: 1–6; 1994, Vol. 2, No. 8: 4–8; No. 15: 1–2, London. *Hikmat*, 1993, Vol. 1, No. 4: 29–30; No. 5–6: 10; No. 9–10: 1–11. *Haftanama-ye Wahdat*, 1993, Vol. 3, No. 86: 2–3, No. 87: 1–3, 7, No. 88: 3–5, Qom. *Liberation*, 16 Febraury 1993, Paris. *Le Mond*, 17 & 19 Febraury 1993, Paris. *Jamhuri-ye Islami*, 17 Febraury 1993, Tehran.
  11. See *Ihya-ye Huwyyat: Majmu'aye Sokhanrani ha-ye Ustad-e Shaheed*, 1995, (Collection of Mazari's speeches), under *bawar-e nawin*, pp. 85–86.



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# Glossary

<i>Abi</i>	Rainfall land
<i>Aghil</i>	Hamlet, sub-village
<i>Ali Allahi</i>	Worshiper of Ali
<i>Amir</i>	Commander, giver of <i>amr</i> . Obsolescent title of the nobility or the tribalchief
<i>Amirulmominin</i>	Commander of faithful
<i>Amr</i>	Command
<i>Anjoman</i>	Society, association, meeting, assembly
<i>Arbab</i>	Lord, boss, master, one endowed with special quality
<i>Arssaqal</i>	Leader, head
<i>Ashura</i>	The tenth of <i>Moharram</i> ,
<i>Asiaban</i>	The person in charge of mill or <i>Asia</i>
<i>Asia-ye Abi</i>	Watermill
<i>Asia-ye Badi</i>	Windmill
<i>Asia-ye Dasti</i>	Handmill
<i>Azadi</i>	Freedom
<i>Baba</i>	Father, father of nation
<i>Bachah</i>	Boy, child
<i>Band</i>	Dam
<i>Barak</i>	A thick woollen cloth
<i>Beg</i>	Obsolescent title of the nobility or the tribal chief, head, master, lord or prince
<i>Bigari</i>	Forced labour, unpaid labour
<i>Bousatn</i>	Garden
<i>Chaka</i>	Sour yoghurt
<i>Chishma</i>	Spring
<i>Choocha</i>	Son, child
<i>Da'wat</i>	Invitation

## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

<i>Dabistan</i>	Primary school
<i>Daido/Bolbi</i>	Yodeling
<i>Darbar</i>	Court
<i>Dewan</i>	Court
<i>Diwar</i>	Wall
<i>Dudrau</i>	Kitchen, family
<i>Fard</i>	Couple in poem, person
<i>Farman</i>	Decree
<i>Frari</i>	Escapee, displaced person
<i>Ghali</i>	Extremist
<i>Ghazal</i>	Love poem, love song
<i>Gilim</i>	Rug
<i>Golistan</i>	Rose garden, flower garden
<i>Haibat</i>	Command
<i>Haji</i>	One who has made pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>Harekat</i>	Movement
<i>Hauza</i>	Centre for Islamic studies
<i>Hazaragi</i>	Farsi dialect of Hazaras
<i>Hezb</i>	Party
<i>Hizbullab</i>	Party of God
<i>I'tilaf</i>	Coalition
<i>Imambara</i>	Place where the martyrdom of Imam Hossain is mourned for
<i>Ingelab</i>	Revolution
<i>Insijam</i>	Coordination
<i>Jabha</i>	Front
<i>Jajim</i>	Spread
<i>Jami'a</i>	University
<i>Jerib</i>	0.195 hectares
<i>Jihad</i>	Holy war against non Muslim only
<i>Jirga</i>	Meeting, council
<i>Jolgah</i>	Plain, prairi
<i>Jowali</i>	Porter
<i>Jowaligari</i>	Portering
<i>Juy</i>	Ditch
<i>Kafir</i>	Unbelieler, infidel, pagan
<i>Kaldar</i>	Old Indian currency
<i>Karachiwani</i>	Driving push-cart
<i>Kargari/Bannaye</i>	Working in constructing site
<i>Kariz</i>	Aqueduct, under ground canal.

## Glossary

<i>Khan</i>	Obsolescent title of the nobility or the tribal chief
<i>Khanawar</i>	Joint family
<i>Kherwar</i>	100 <i>ser</i>
<i>Khishi</i>	Engagement
<i>Khoms</i>	Islamic tax on income, but only in Shi'a sect
<i>Kongera</i>	Congress
<i>Kuchi</i>	Nomad
<i>Kudakistan</i>	Kindergarten
<i>Lahjah</i>	Accent
<i>Lalmi</i>	Irrigated land
<i>Maddah</i>	Panegyrist, eulogist, admirer
<i>Madrassa</i>	Traditional Islamic school
<i>Majlis-e Shura-ye Milli</i>	National council
<i>Makhta</i>	Lament, elegy
<i>Malik</i>	Landlord, master, proprietor, owner, bearer
<i>Markaz</i>	Centre
<i>Mashk</i>	Leather sack
<i>Maska</i>	Butter.
<i>Millat</i>	Nation
<i>Milliyat</i>	National
<i>Mir</i>	Obsolescent title of the nobility or the tribal chief
<i>Mirab</i>	The person in charge of water division
<i>Mottahid</i>	United
<i>Mozduri</i>	Manual labour, work done by a coolie
<i>Mulla</i>	Clergy
<i>Najis</i>	Impure
<i>Nahzat</i>	Resurgence
<i>Namad</i>	Felt
<i>Nanmalidah</i>	Hazaragi food, mixture of grained bread, oil and sugar
<i>Nanwaye</i>	Bakery
<i>Naqilin</i>	Transferred
<i>Naqqal</i>	Reciter
<i>Naqqali</i>	Reciting stories, story telling
<i>Nasr</i>	Victory
<i>Naswar</i>	Tobacco powder
<i>Navah</i>	Valley
<i>Nazargah</i>	The alleged site which have been visited by Imams or their descendants

## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

<i>Niroo</i>	Force
<i>Omur</i>	Affairs
<i>Panir</i>	Chees,
<i>Pasdar</i>	Guardian
<i>Pir</i>	Master, spiritual guide or teacher
<i>Qala</i>	Castle
<i>Qalin</i>	Carpet
<i>Qaryah</i>	Village
<i>Qaum</i>	Ethnic group, nation
<i>Qawali</i>	Group singing
<i>Qilaq</i>	Village
<i>Qobi/Nauchah</i>	Opening created by floods
<i>Qol</i>	Valley
<i>Qurut</i>	Butter milk
<i>Roghan</i>	Cooking oil
<i>Sabzijat</i>	Vegetables, herbs
<i>Samuch</i>	Man made cave
<i>Sarachah</i>	The room above the entrance gate
<i>Sarasari</i>	Nationwide, throughout, all
<i>Sardar</i>	Obsolescent title of the nobility or the tribal chief, army commander, head, master, lord or prince
<i>Sarhadi</i>	Border people
<i>Sarya/Nahr</i>	River
<i>Sazman</i>	Organization
<i>Ser</i>	7066 kg
<i>Shahrisatn</i>	Township, small province
<i>Shura</i>	Council
<i>Siahchal</i>	Black well
<i>Sultan</i>	King,
<i>Takiya Khana</i>	Place where the martyrdom of Imam Hossain is mourned for
<i>Taqqiya</i>	Dissimulation, quietism
<i>Tayefa</i>	Clan, tribe
<i>Tazkira</i>	National Identity Card
<i>Toi</i>	Marriage, wedding
<i>Tol, Tolwar, Tolwara</i>	Multi family
<i>Ulus</i>	People, soldier, feudal lord
<i>Ulushi Jirga</i>	National council, grand council
<i>Ustad</i>	Master
<i>Velayat-e faqih</i>	Principle of Jurisprudence



## *Glossary*

<i>Wairankar</i>	Trader of car spare parts
<i>Wali</i>	Mayor
<i>Wilayat</i>	Province
<i>Zai</i>	Son of
<i>Zakat</i>	Islamic tax on produce
<i>Zawar</i>	Pilgrim, visitor
<i>Zillullah</i>	The shadow of God
<i>Ziyaratgah</i>	The alleged site of tombs of respected religious figures or martyrs
<i>Zulfiqar</i>	The famous Ali's sword.



# Appendixes

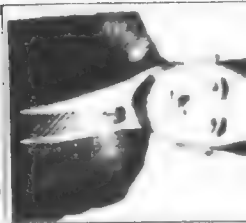


# Appendix 1

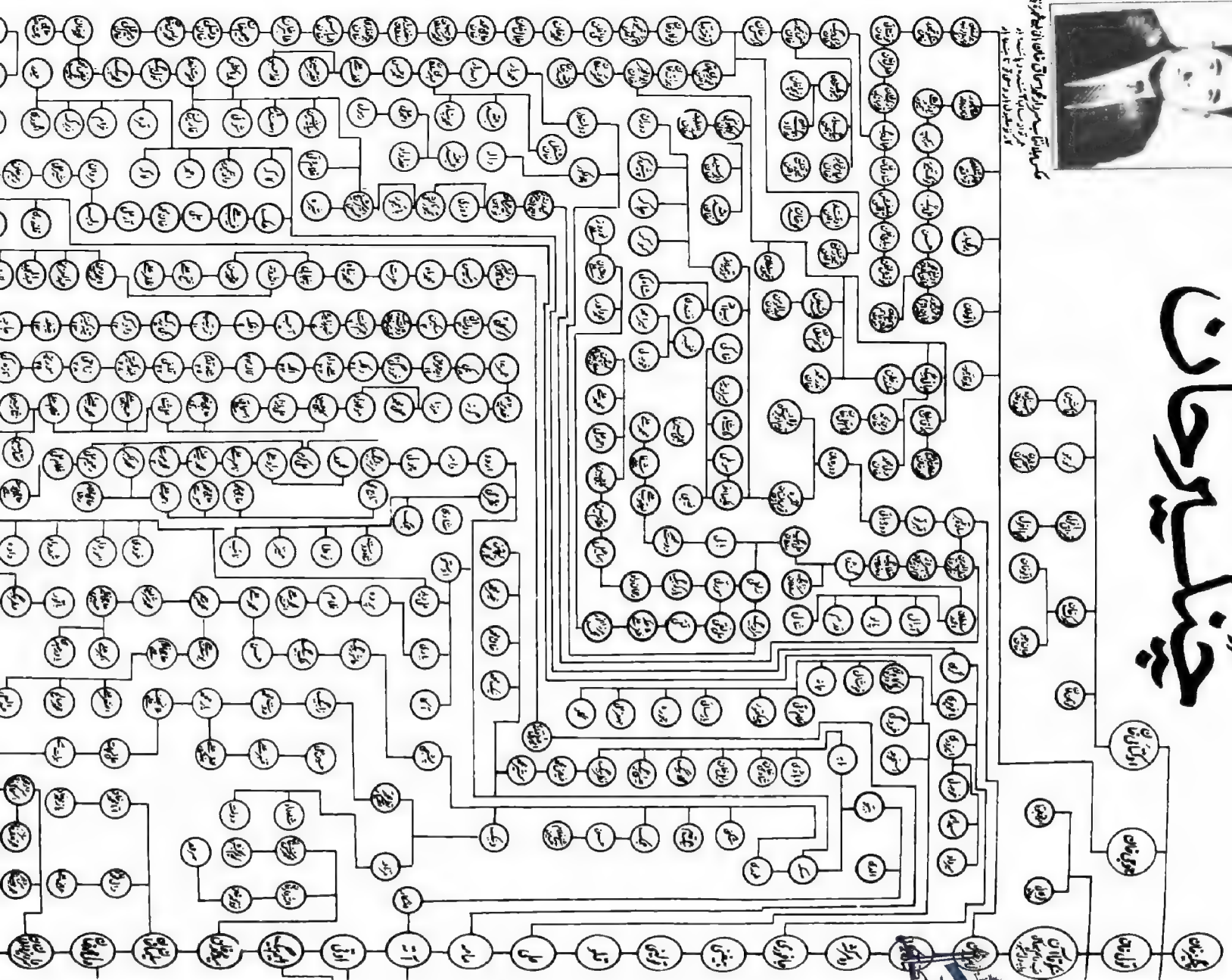
The genealogy of Changiz Khan as given by Shaikh Nasir Ali Ansari,  
1968, Quetta, Pakistan.



# چٹلہ رحمان



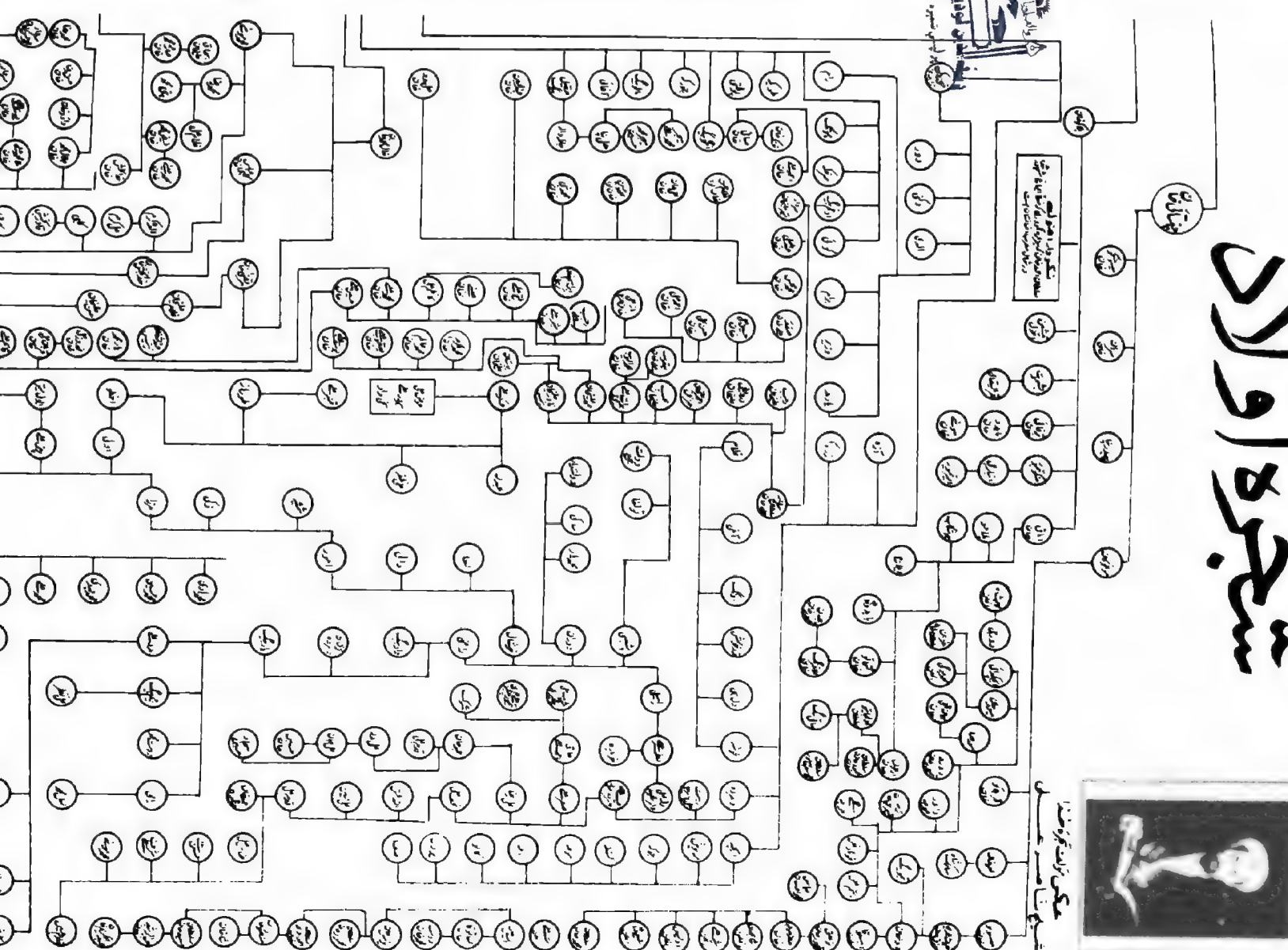
مکہ مکرمہ میں ولادت فرمایا تھا ان کا نام رحمان تھا  
میرزا محمد علی خان صاحب  
میرزا محمد علی خان صاحب



# سجڑہ اولاد



مکہ مکرمہ میں ولادت فرمایا تھا  
میرزا محمد علی خان صاحب  
میرزا محمد علی خان صاحب



## Appendix 2

This is to be certified that Hazara  
tribe has been declared as a local tribe of Quetta  
Division by the Government of Pakistan.



*[Signature]*  
15.6.63

CITY MAGISTRATE, QUETTA

## Appendix 3

Name of organization	Leadership	Place and date of foundation	Publication	Characteristic
<i>Anjoman-e Islami-e Daneshjoyan</i> (Islamic Student Association)	Hasan Alawi	Tehran, Iran, 1980	<i>Se-ye Hoot</i>	Political & Cultural
<i>Fedaiyan-e Islam</i> (Islamic Zealots)	Misbah Mazari	Tehran, Iran, 1980	N/A*	Political & Militant
<i>Fedaiyan-e Ommat-e Mosalman</i> (Muslim Ommat Zealots)	Rizaii Saripol	Tehran, Iran, 1980	N/A	Political & Militant
<i>Goruh-e Tauhidi-e Qiyam</i> (The Resurrection Divine Unity Group)	Qasim Akhgar	Quetta, Pakistan, 1984	<i>Fajr-e Azadi</i>	Cultural & Political
<i>Groh-e Wahdat-e Islami</i> (The Islamic Unity Group)	Rizwani Ghaznawi	Tehran, Iran, 1979	<i>Wahdat-e Islami</i>	Political & Militant
<i>Harekat-e Islami</i> (Islamic Movement)	Asif Mohsini Qandahari	Qom, Iran, 1979	<i>Istiqamat</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Hizb-e Ra'ad</i> (Thunder Party)	Shaizada Khaza'i	Mashhad, Iran, 1979	<i>Paikar-e Islami</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Hizb-e Da'wat-e Islami</i>	Hossain	Qom, Iran, 1979	<i>Payam-e Da'wat</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Hizb-e Ittihad-e Inqilab-e Islami</i> (United Party of Islamic Revolution)	Joined Council	Qom, Iran, 1979	<i>Azadi</i>	Political & Militant
<i>Hizbollah</i> (Party of God)	Yazdan Ali Wosuqi	Qom, Iran, 1980	N/A	Militant
<i>Hizb-e Da'wat-e Ittihad-e Islamic</i> (Party of Islamic Invitation of Unity)	Joined Council	Qom, Iran, 1986	<i>Jihad</i>	Political & Cultural
<i>Hizbollah</i> (Party of God)	Qari Ahmad Ghordarwazi	Herat, Afghanistan	<i>Fath</i>	Militant
<i>Islam Maktab-e Tauhid</i> (Islam: School of Divine Unity)	Asadullah Noktadan	Qom, Iran 1979	<i>Ommat</i>	Political & Cultural



## *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*

Name of organization	Leadership	Place and date of foundation	Publication	Characteristic
<i>Ittihadia-e Mujahideen-e Islami</i> (Islamic Mojahidin Union)	Abdul Hossain Maqsudi	Quetta, Pakistan, 1979	<i>Payam-e Wahdat</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Ittihadia-e Mujahideen-e Islami</i> (Islamic Mojahidin Union)	Gharjistani	Quetta, Pakistan, 1982	<i>Gol-e Sorkh</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Jonbesh-e Islami-e Mostaz'affin</i> (Islamic Dispossessed Movement)	Hossain Aqili & Akhlaqi	Tehran, Iran, 1979	N/A	Militant & Political
<i>Jonbesh-e Mosalmanan-e Mobariz</i> (Moslim Warrior Movement)	Joined Council	Tehran, Iran, 1979	<i>Payam-e Mobariz</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Jonbesh-e Moqawimat-e Islami</i> (Islamic Resistant Movement)	Salman Ranjbar	Qom, Iran, 1979	<i>Payam-e Mohajir</i>	Political & Cultural
<i>Jonbesh-e Islami</i> (Islamic Movement)	Hossain Aqili	Tehran, Iran, 1980	N/A	Militant & Political
<i>Kanum-e Muhajir</i> (Refugee Centre)	Joined Council	Qom, Iran, 1979	<i>Payam-e Mobariz</i>	Political & Cultural
<i>Nahzat-e Islami</i> (Islamic Resurgence)	Ali Iftikhair	Qom, Iran, 1979	<i>Nahzat</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Nahzat-e Rohaniyat wa Javan</i> (Youth and Cleric Resurgence)	Naqawi	Tehran, Iran, 1979	<i>Hijrat</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Neiru-ye Islami</i> (Islamic Force)	Zahir Mohaqqiq	Qom, Iran, 1979	<i>Difa'</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Neiru-ye Inqelab-e Islamic</i> (Islamic Revolutionary Force)	Hasan Laro, o	Tehran, Iran, 1980	<i>Sonan</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Pasdaran-e Jihad</i> (Jihad Guards)	Akbari	Qom, Iran, 1979	<i>Payam-e Pasdar</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Rohaniyat-e Mobariz</i> (Warrior Clergy)	Qorban Ali Mohaqqiq	Qom, Iran, 1980	N/A	Militant & Political
<i>Sazman-e Nasr</i> (Victory Organization)	Joined Council	Qom, Iran, 1979	<i>Payam-e Mostaz'affin</i>	Militant & Political

## Appendixes

Name of organization	Leadership	Place and date of foundation	Publication	Characteristic
<i>Sazman-e Mujahideen-e Mostaz'afin</i> (Dispossessed Mohahidin Organization)	Joined Council	Tehran, Iran, 1979	<i>Payam-e Mobariz</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Sazman-e Fallah Islami</i> (Islamic Salvation Organization)	Mo'llim Babah Qarabaghi	Ghazni, Afghanistan, 1980	N/A	Political & Cultural
<i>Shura-ye Inqelabi-e Ittifaq Islami</i> (Council of Islamic Revolution Union)	Sayyed Ali Bihishti	Bamiyan, Afghanistan, 1979	<i>Tauhid</i>	Militant & Political
<i>Shura-ye Farhangi-e Islami</i> (Islamic Cultural Council)	Gharjistani	Quetta, Pakistan, 1983	<i>Nida-ye Khorasan</i>	Cultural & Political
<i>Shura-ye I'tilaf-e Islami</i>	Joined Council	Tehran, Iran, 1987	N/A	Political

\*N/A = Not available.

Sources: Drulatabadi, 1992 and Irfani, 1993.



## Appendix 4

4a

بسمه تعالی

سازمان نیروی انقلاب اسلامی افغانستان

دفتر مرکزی



شماره ۴

تاریخ ۱۳۶۰ / ۱۱ / ۱۶

به سپاه پاسداران انقلاب اسلامی اسلام غرب :

امید داریم که در سنگرهای مبارزه حق علیه کفر و الحاد و صدام کافر به توجه صاحب الزمان (ع) به نیروی های جسم گیر موفق اید .  
برادر محترم با کمال معذرت مراتب زهر را به عرضتان میرسانم .  
افراد سازمان نیروی انقلاب اسلامی که تحت نظر برادران در مدت تقریباً شش برج علیه لشکر صدام کافر مبارزه نموده در طول این مدت چهار برج معاش به افراد سازمان از اقرار فی برج مبلغ ( ۱۵۰۰ / ۰ ) تومان حقوق برای برادران حواله و تادیه فرموده اید در حالیکه اکثر از برادران دارای فامیل میباشند و معاش قبلی این برادران بالغ ( ( ۲۵۰۰ ) ) تومان بوده .

بنابراین از برادران مسئول خواهش میروم که در حصر افراد سازمان مثل برادران سپاه بذل توجه شود - زیرا اکثر این برادران در طول رفت و آمد گریه ماشین و مصارف راه خویش از سازمان اخذ نموده امین پول فقط مصارف سیگار جیب خرچ شان بوده و بمعاش از این حقوق - پرداخت شده شما مصارف فامیلی شخصی خویش را تأمین نموده است به همه حال در طول مدت هر چند بودجه که در امکانات سازمان بوده از برادران مضایقه نگرد - چون وضع بودجه سازمان هم خوب نیست روی این اصل توجه برادران را خواهیم . با تقدیم احترام

(( برادر شمالی محمد حسن - کهنس ))

(( مسئول و سرپرست سازمان ))

4a

Date: 16/1/1360 (6 April 1981)

No.: 64

In the Name of God  
Organization of the Revolutionary Islamic Force of Afghanistan  
Headquarters

To the Islamic Revolutionary Guards of West Ilam,  
Hoping for your outstanding victory in your struggle against infidel  
Saddam and all infidels.

Dear brother, I bring, with apologies, the following to your attention.  
Members of the ORIFA who have been fighting against Saddam's  
army under the supervision of our brothers over the last six months,  
have received only four months pay at the rate of 1500 Tomans per  
month, while most of these brothers are married and had previous  
salaries of over 2500 Tomans at their last place of employment.

It is therefore being requested of those in charge to take this matter  
under consideration – for most of these brothers have throughout this  
period received transportation money from the ORIFA. Their  
monthly salary has simply covered their spending money require-  
ments, while the majority must also support their families on this  
money. The ORIFA has never hesitated to provide financial support  
for these brothers, but wishes to bring the matter to your attention at  
this time due to its current financial problems.

(Your brother, Mohammad Hassan Karimi)  
(Leader of the OIRFA)

[Signed]



بسمه تعالی

سازمان نیروی انقلاب اسلامی افغانستان

ستاد مرکزی

4b

شماره - 109

تاریخ ۶ / ۴ / ۱۳۴۰

به استناداری محترم اعلام غرب !

بعد از درود بی پایان بروج شهدای گگون کفن اسلام و پیروزی برادران اسلام که در سنگرهای حق علیه کفرهای بعثی که در حال جنگند - مراتب زیر را محضر مبارک بعرض می‌رسانیم.

برادران سازمان نیروی انقلاب اسلامی که از اول جنگ تحصیلات تاکنون بنا بر پیام رنجبر عالم را امام تاکنون دوشادوش برادران ایرانی جنگیده اند و در اثر فعالیت های شان تعداد اسلحه از بعثی های کافر به غنیمت گرفته اند که سازمان بنا بر ضرورتی که بر اسلحه دارد موضوع را محضر برادر استاد جلال الدین فارسی بمعرض رسانید که برادر استاد جلال الدین فارسی با برادر رضائی فرمانده سپاه پاسداران موضوع را تلفونی مطرح و بعد برادر رضائی به حضور برادر استاد فارسی الحامیان فرمودند که موضوع را ذریعه تلفن گرام به اولام بعرض مسئولین می‌رسانم تا اسلحه های غنیمت گرفته شده را بدست مقررین سازمان نیروی انقلاب اسلامی افغانستان قرار دهند.

چون تعداد از برادران عازم جبهات افغانستان می‌باشند - لهذا برادر حسینی معاون سرپرست سازمان نیروی انقلاب اسلامی افغانستان با برادران در ناطق حضور شما معرفی شد امیدوارم که اسلحه غنیمت گرفته شده را با فشنگ مورد ضرورت بدست مقررین گذاشته مسئولین را رضایت دهد. با تقدیم احترام

(( برادر شمالی محمد حسن - کریم ))

(( مسئول و سرپرست سازمان ))

109

4b

Date: 6/4/1360 (27/6/1981)

No.: 109

In the name of God  
Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Force of Afghanistan  
Headquarters

To the Governor of West Ilam,

After greetings to the spirit of Islam's martyrs, [and wishes] for the victory of our Islamic brothers fighting in the trenches against Baathist infidels - we bring the following to your attention.

Members of the OIRFA, who have been fighting shoulder to shoulder with their Iranian brothers in response to the call of the Imam [Khomeini], have succeeded in capturing a certain amount of enemy weapons. Given the Organization's need for such weapons, the matter was discussed with brother Jalaluddin Farsi, who in turn put the matter to brother Reza'i, Chief Commander in charge of the Revolutionary Guards. As a result we were given assurances by brother Reza'i that he would contact the authorities in Ilam in order to allow the OIRFA to retain the confiscated arms.

Since a number of our members are returning to the front in Afghanistan, I have despatched brother Hossaini, deputy leader of the OIRFA, with brother Nadir Nateqi, to your office, so that the abovementioned arms, together with the appropriate ammunitions, be put in their possession.

With regards,

(Your brother, Mohammad Hassan Karimi)  
(Leader on the OIRFA)

[Signed]





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